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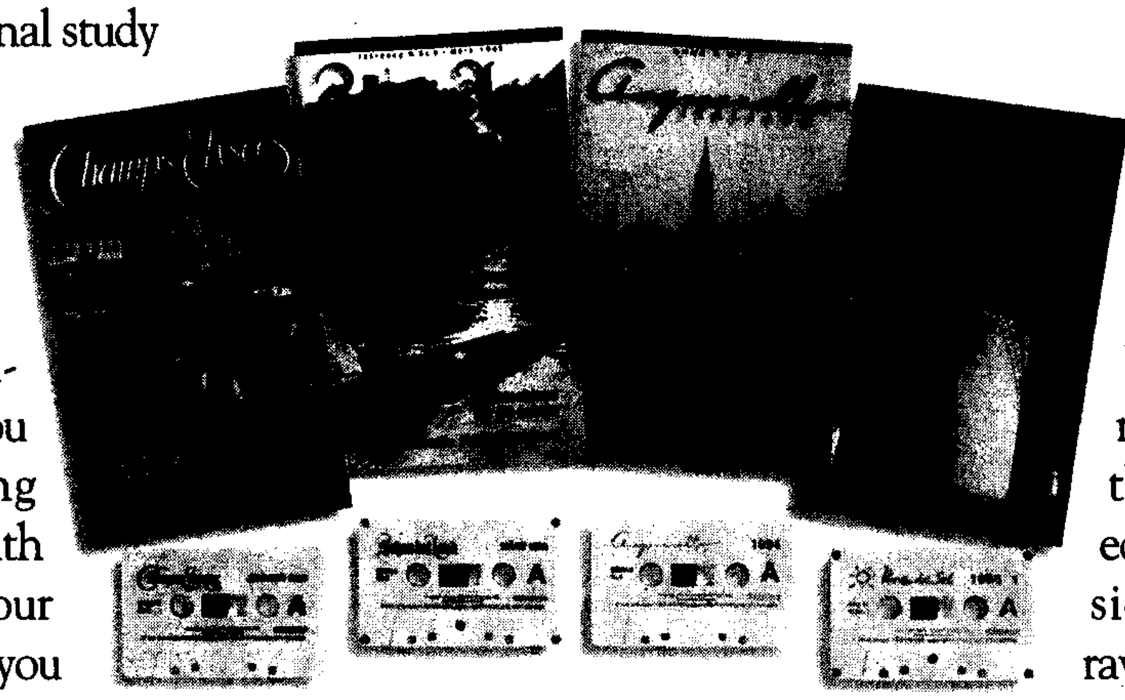

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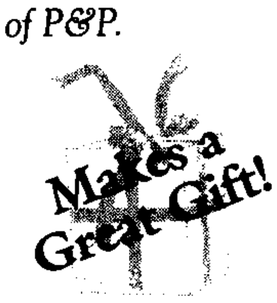

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Gnome

I WOULD like to take this opportunity to deny recent allegations that divorce proceedings brought by Lady Anna Gnome in San Alimonio, California, will be long and acrimonious.

The fact that my former wife is claiming $800 billion as a settlement together with my Manhattan Ranch and luxury penthouse yacht ("The Dirty Digger") does not mean that our separation is anything but amicable.

Let me point out to Lady Anna's American lawyers, Messrs Suezman, Grabbitski and Runstein that all the aforementioned monies and properties are owned not by myself but by the educational charity Gnome Adult Films PLC, a company registered in Grand Cayman which is administered by a group of fictitious *(surely 'anonymous'? E.S.)* trustees in Liechtenstein who can never be revealed.

There has incidentally been no reporting of my divorce in any of the Gnome newspapers – not because I interfere in their running, but because my divorce is a private matter and my editors are well-known for their respect for the privacy of important public figures such as myself.

For the record, Lady Gnome has been offered a very generous settlement consisting of a whole year's subscription to the Times Newspaper at a discounted rate (subject to availability).

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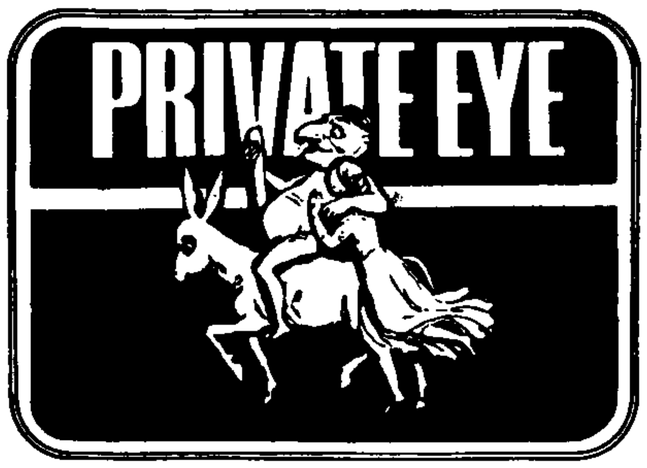

COLOUR SECTION

WHAT persuaded the security services to demand the arrest of David Shayler? After all, he has been leaking stuff to newspapers for more than a year now with impunity.

The answer lies in the work he has been doing with the BBC's *Panorama* programme and his old colleague on the *Sunday Times*, David Leppard, to expose an MI6 assassination plot on Colonel Gadaffi, ruler of Libya.

Shayler worked in the counter-terrorist branch of MI5 and had a great deal to do with Libya. He spent a lot of time, for instance, on the Lockerbie bombing, for which he believes, as does the British government, that the two accused Libyans were primarily responsible. His allegations about the plot against Gadaffi came just as MI5 (though interestingly not MI6) was publicly and emphatically claiming that it does not carry out assassinations. The contradiction was too hard to take and the security services moved. They quickly persuaded attorney-general John Morris to get Shayler arrested and start legal proceedings which can bring the government nothing but grief.

The first aim of the arrest — to stop any loose talk about the assassination plot — was immediately scuppered. In reporting Shayler's arrest Leppard and Co splashed the allegation about the plot all over the *Sunday Times* front page.

● ONE aspect of David Shayler's revelations which has embarrassed MI5 is the file on Peter Mandelson. Last year Shayler disclosed that a security file on Mandy reveals that for a short time, while at school in Hendon and soon after leaving it, Mandy was a member of the Communist party. This fact is mentioned in his file, but the bulk of it refers to Mandelson's sexual inclinations and muses in the usual MI5 fashion on whether or not Mandelson, if ever he achieved high office, would be likely to be blackmailed — though not of course by the intelligence services.

AS THE fuss over "Lobbygate" dies down, the industry's statutory body, the Association of Professional Political Consultants (APPC), has concluded its own investigation into what went wrong.

The study of events at GJW Government Relations, whose Karl Milner sent an advance copy of a select committee report to the *Observer*'s Gregory Palast, went into such detail that the two independent figures charged with investigating the affair by the APPC, former cabinet secretary Lord Armstrong and QC Nicholas Purnell, only found time to speak to the directors of the company at length (for a fee of £350 each an hour) — but not to interview any other members of staff, even Milner himself.

The APPC's verdict — that whereas Derek Draper, of GPC, was a "rogue element", Milner merely made an unfortunate mistake — exonerated both companies from any blame and allowed them to return as full members of the association, from which they had voluntarily withdrawn while the investigation was underway.

The threat of expulsion is not, however, as terrible a prospect as it might appear: the APPC's code is entirely voluntary, and such major players in the lobbying arena as Tim "Flasher" Bell's Lowe Bell Communications decline to sign up to it. The whole affair might cause the APPC to reconsider the effectiveness of its code of practice — food for thought for its chairman, Andrew Gifford, who also happens to be chief executive of GJW.

MOHAMED "Al" Fayed paid tribute to his old enemy Tiny Rowland in yet another exclusive interview with Britain's most credulous newspaper, the *Mirror*. "I beat him fair and square in business because I always played straight," the phoney pharaoh recalled, wiping away his crocodile tears. "But this isn't the time to revel in that."

Obedient as ever, the *Mirror* did not revel in it — nor even mention that Fayed's "fair and square" victory in the battle for control of Harrods was won by fraud and deceit. As an official DTI inquiry later concluded: "The lies of Mohamed Fayed and his success in 'gagging' the press created a new fact: that lies were the truth and the truth was a lie."

Having seen off his most dangerous enemy, Fayed thinks another victory is within his grasp. Over lunch at the *Mirror* the other day, Jack Straw insisted that he still hadn't made up his mind whether to give the old villain British citizenship. But Fayed himself is confident. "When I get my passport," he boasted to his adoring disciple Brian Basham recently, "I'll become mayor of London!"

If he stands as an independent, he may achieve the rare feat of making Lord Archer look like Mr Clean.

LORD SAINSBURY is the new minister of state at the department of trade, where ministers will soon have to take sensitive decisions about a report from the office of fair trading (OFT) into alleged profiteering by the big supermarkets at the expense of suppliers and customers.

The four supermarket combines which control nearly half the country's food sales are Tesco, Asda, Safeway and, er, Sainsbury's (immediate past chairman and current biggest shareholder: the new minister for trade).

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● *Sackwatch: Political Pundits on Parade* 7
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● *St Albion's Summer Special* 18, 19
● *Stephen Lawrence: The Silent Witnesses* 26, 27

"Dear Alastair Campbell, Am I having a lovely time? Yours, Tony."

NEWS

THE LEGGOVER REPORT

THERE are three central mysteries in the Sandline affair which were entirely unanswered by the Legg report.

These are: why senior foreign office officials were so ready to meet representatives of a company providing armed mercenaries; why at least two of them lied about Sandline's provision of arms to Sierra Leone in direct contravention of the FO's own embargo; and why Britain's high commissioner in Sierra Leone, Peter Penfold, went to such trouble to have meetings and lunches with Sandline directors to promote the use of mercenaries in a country where his government and the United Nations were utterly opposed to military intervention.

The short answer to all these mysteries is one word: *diamonds*.

The real reason so many important people were worried about the May 1997 military coup in Sierra Leone was that it threatened generous concessions to mine for diamonds which had been dished out by the government of President Kabbah.

One lucky beneficiary was an unorthodox Thai businessman called Rakesh Saxena, who gave Sandline $1.5m to help put President Kabbah back in power by force of arms. He promised more money, but was unable to pay it when he was clapped into prison in Vancouver awaiting extradition to Thailand on multi-million fraud charges.

Another company which won back its lucrative mining contracts in Sierra Leone when Kabbah was reinstalled as president is Diamondworks, whose biggest shareholder is the British businessman Tony Buckingham, former chief executive of Sandline.

Traditionally the foreign office keeps close contact with the diamond companies and their associated mercenaries. Diamondworks' country manager in Sierra Leone is Rupert Bowen, 53, who spent seven years in the army before joining the ministry of defence in 1970. He was, and is, closely associated with MI6, in whose interests he has served in the British embassies in Bonn, Lusaka and Vienna.

In 1990 Bowen became first secretary in the UK high commission in Namibia, one of the world's biggest producers of precious stones, from which he branched out quite naturally into the diamond industry. Naturally he kept up his close contacts with the FO. So did Simon Mann, another MI6 "asset" who now functions as chief assistant to the big man — Tony Buckingham — himself.

With contacts like those, it was relatively easy for Sandline to get into the FO for meetings with top officials; quite natural that the company should form such a close association with the British high commissioner in Sierra Leone; and only too inevitable that the FO should pander to them, be found out covering up for them and be rapped over the knuckles with a feather of a "thorough and exhaustive inquiry" (Scott in 1995, Legg in 1998).

WHAT news from Hong Kong's shiny new international airport, where the *Eye*'s old friend EDS is behind the whizzbang "flight information display system"?

EDS's public contracts have a habit of running over time and budget, so has the company finally got it right? According to the *Times*'s *Interface*, "EDS says it is the most advanced and complex flight information and management system in the world".

A pity, then, that Hong Kong's new rulers say the airport has made them "the laughing stock of the world" because of teething problems. Freight has been disrupted, phones and toilets have not been working... and thousands of passengers have missed planes because the flight information display system has malfunctioned.

Street Of Shame

TINY ROWLAND made his fortune in Africa, where he realised that a bit of *arslikhan* to black political leaders in the pages of his newspapers could pay lucrative dividends. "Tiny backed almost everyone," the veteran Zimbabwean nationalist James Chikerema recalled last week. "There'll never be anyone in Africa like him again."

Oh really? Or O'Reilly? Tony O'Reilly, the baked bean tycoon and owner of the *Independent*, has already established a commanding presence in the South African media, where his hacks can be relied upon to praise the ruling ANC at every opportunity. And now he is hoping to repeat the trick in Zimbabwe, where the government Investment Centre in Harare has licensed a new group called Associated Newspapers Zimbabwe (ANZ), which hopes to launch a new English-language daily.

O'Reilly and a few business chums have a 60 percent stake in the consortium, while the other 40 percent will be held by black investors headed by journalist Wilf Mbanga — who just happens to be the nephew of vice-president Simon Muzenda.

President Robert Mugabe is understandably delighted by this foreign intervention, which he hopes will give his image some much-needed polishing. When a European-owned paper reported three weeks ago that Mugabe's second wife, 32-year-old Grace, had built a second multi-million dollar home for her family, the 76-year-old president exploded. "They tell lies, lies, lies!" he screamed at embarrassed diplomats and parliamentarians at a reception in Harare. "Let the gutter press take heed because we are not going to have this kind of journalism in our country."

Tony O'Reilly could be just the man. He became friends with Mugabe soon after Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, while he was still running Heinz: even now Mugabe will sometimes put a giant-sized can of Heinz beans on his head to amuse visitors to State House. After Mugabe's first wife, Sally, died in 1992, the president went to stay with the O'Reillys at their fabulous house in County Kildare, and the two Jesuit-educated men attended high mass in a medieval private chapel built around a crusader's tomb.

Meanwhile Zimbabwe sinks into a morass of corruption and poverty: earlier this year food-riots broke out and eight people were shot dead by nervous policemen. But no doubt O'Reilly's new paper will treat such trifling matters with a sense of proportion.

MICHAEL WALTERS, the *Daily Mail's* deputy City editor, is leaving the newspaper and vastly increasing his salary in one lucrative step by joining a PR company.

One firm in particular will miss his presence on the influential City desk: GEO Interactive Media Group, an Israeli company he has supported hugely and called a "potential soaraway share punt".

He told *Mail* readers last February all about the firm's innovative internet products and announced "Trust me. This is exciting... Sales are soaring and margins are massive" — although he did admit any attempt at "predicting profits is little better than a guess".

In a second article in May Walters gave the company more publicity calling it "an outstanding high-risk, high-return gamble".

In February, Walters, along with other financial hacks enjoyed a lavish junket to Israel, courtesy of the Israeli government. He was nominated for the trip by an up-and-coming Israeli company. Its name? Step forward GEO Interactive Media Group.

PS: On 31 July GEO Interactive shares took a terrible tumble, dropping by 45 percent.

"He's what we always wanted – a bouncing baby boy"

WOMEN in Journalism, the group dedicated to fighting male chauvinism in the Street of Shame, likes to give the impression it is a profoundly democratic organisation. Women are different, you see — not for them the back-stabbing and shifty manoeuvring of their male colleagues. Sisterhood is all.

Er, up to a point, Lady Copper. Wimmin in Journalism, which is run by Lady Eve Bollard and *Times* harpy Mary-Ann Sieghart, held its summer party on 21 July at 11 Downing Street, thanks to contacts with Gordon Brown's girlfriend, PR executive Sarah Macauley. All WiJ members received an invitation, but were warned: "Numbers are limited to 100 members... Tickets will be allocated strictly on a first-come, first-served basis, so if you wish to attend please return your form as quickly as possible."

Hackette Anna Young took this at its word and faxed an application within an hour of the postman delivering her invitation. Alas her application was unsuccessful. Had 100 hackettes all faxed the organisers within the hour? Apparently not. She was puzzled to discover that a friend who left it a few days before applying by post did get a ticket.

Perhaps Ms Young's lack of success was something to do with the fact that a) she is an unfamous freelance, ie not important in the eyes of La Bollard; and b) she wrote "please note that I use a wheelchair" on her application.

Clearly not qualified to sip rosé chez Gordon and Sarah.

THE *Mail*'s royal hack Richard Kay was quick to rush into print condemning the *Sunday Mirror* story that Princes William and Harry had planned a surprise 50th birthday party for their father, in which they would star in a play with luvvies Stephen Fry and Emma Thompson. The young princes were said to be "sad, angry and upset" that their surprise had been spoiled.

Quite so. But isn't this the same Richard Kay who once revealed that the rest of the royal family were to hold a special dinner at the Waterside Inn in Bray for the Queen's 70th birthday? When that surprise was ruined, for security reasons the event was transferred to Windsor Castle where the Roux brothers had to provide an upmarket takeaway instead.

The *Mail* is no stranger to such hypocrisy, of course, having blasted "tacky" Di souvenirs while boosting its circulation on the back of endless Diana partworks and pullouts. As for Kay, fellow hacks at the *Mail* have noticed a distinct lack of royal exclusives since his best contact, er, died.

CONGRATULATIONS to young Adam Leigh, promoted from a lowly sub-editing job on the *Independent* to become news editor of the *Independent on Sunday*.

No one will be more delighted by Adam's success than his uncle Simon Kelner, editor-in-chief of both papers.

Congratulations, too, to one Karen Kelner, who has been hired as a picture researcher by the *Sindie*. Executives subjected her to a gruelling interview and took up her references before deciding that, yes, the editor-in-chief's wife was the perfect candidate for the job.

SANDY MITCHELL, the tweedy former deputy editor of *Country Life*, has had a swift initiation into the ways of Fleet Street since arriving at the *Sunday Torygraph* last month to edit the Review section.

When the *Mirror* revealed that Lord Snowdon had fathered a "love-child" by *Country Life* hackette Melanie Cable-Alexander, Mitchell happened to mention to Dominic Lawson that it was he who had introduced Melanie to the libidinous earl.

Lawson's eyes lit up. "Write it up!" he barked.

Poor old Mitchell had no great wish to shop his friend Melanie, but nor did he want to offend his new editor. He went home for a day to wrestle with his conscience. The outcome of this 15-round bout was revealed last Sunday: a full-page piece by Mitchell headed "Darling Melanie... love Snowdrop".

This lad will go far.

Congratulations Peter Mandleson. In today's cabinet reshuffle you are set to be rewarded with a promotion into the heart of the Government. It is difficult to think of someone who is more deserving. It is you, as much as Tony Blair, who must take the credit for modernising the Labour Party.

Comment, The Mirror

STAFF at *Punch*, like other employees of Mohamed Fayed, have their phone calls routinely monitored by the boss. But *Punch* hack Dominic Prince seems to have forgotten this when he used his office phone to talk to unauthorised Fayed biographer Tom Bower.

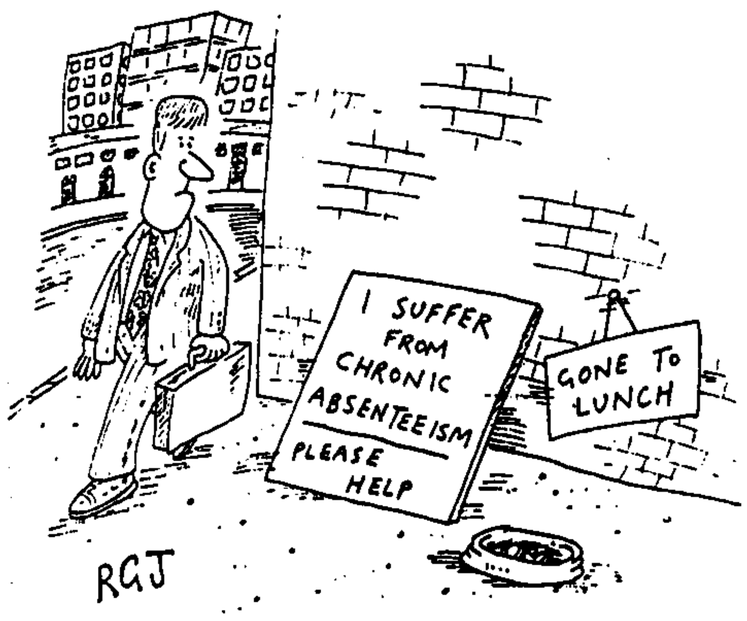
Prince was immediately sacked and escorted from the building by a posse of security guards.

Luckily the portly Prince is managing to find freelance work elsewhere. Last Sunday he wrote a big news story for the *Sindie* about a controversial housing development in Rushmore, Dorset, which would spoil the view from "the neighbouring village of Chettle". Opposition to the plan was led by the chairman of Chettle parish council, "solicitor Edward Bourke".

Prince's otherwise exhaustive article omitted a couple of interesting facts. Bourke is the co-owner of the whole village of Chettle, which is mostly inhabited by farm labourers from the estate. But his tenants also include one weekender from London, an old friend of his who enjoys the use of a cottage there at a peppercorn rent. Who is this lucky chap? Step forward... Dominic Prince.

Meanwhile back at the *Punch* library archive manager Miranda Taylor has found a witty way to pursue overdue accounts. As she reminded one customer whose payment for some prints was still outstanding from last October: "Unfortunately it is too late... to enlist the help of some over-weight English football hooligans who could be sent to your door brandishing broken beer bottles in order to extract the money from you — not that we condone violence in any way, but we are getting very exasperated..."

Just the combination of charm and rib-tickling humour that makes *Punch* such a success on the news-stands!



SACKWATCH

THE RESHUFFLE

UNLIKE government ministers, lobby hacks are in no danger of losing their jobs if they make a mess of things. Which is just as well. Here's what actually happened to certain ministers in the reshuffle last week — together with the expert forecasts of Fleet Street's finest.

Harriet Harman

What they predicted: "The other Cabinet changes under consideration include the demotion of Harriet Harman, possibly to Attorney-General or Minister for Women, operating out of the Cabinet Office," Michael Gove writes in the *Times* on 23 May. Alternatively "Ms Harman might be made Leader of the House". In the *Mirror* on 17 July, Kevin Maguire announces that although Harman will be moved "she is likely to get another job". By 26 July, the day before Blair's announcement, Andrew Grice of the *Sunday Times* is sure that Harman "will hang on to her seat at the Cabinet table, even if this limits the scope of Blair's changes". On the morning of 27 July, *Mirror* political editor Kevin Maguire says that Harman "is tipped to head a new equality unit". According to the *Express*'s political editor, Anthony Bevins, "Harriet Harman will remain in the Cabinet". Even the well-informed Trevor Kavanagh of the *Sun* agrees: "She stays in Cabinet as minister for the family, thanks to support from Chancellor Gordon Brown. A pal said: 'She has made a mess of the job at social security, but it would be indecent to drop her over a cliff'."

What happened: Hours later Harriet Harman is dropped over a cliff.

Peter Mandelson

What they predicted: On 13 July the *Guardian* dismisses "Whitehall gossip" that Mandelson might become president of the board of trade: "That seems unlikely." On 27 July, Kevin Maguire of the *Mirror* has the answer. "Peter Mandelson will today step out of the shadows with his own top Cabinet job," he reports. "The Culture Department, where he would retain control of the Millennium Dome in London, is favourite. Another option would be to create a new European post for Mr Mandelson." Yet another option is mentioned by Anthony Bevins in the *Express*. "Mr Blair is expected to have some surprises up his sleeve — and the nature of Peter Mandelson's expected move could be one of them. One minister suggested mischievously that perhaps he could be sent to Agriculture to replace Mr Cunningham."

What happened: Hours later, Mandelson is appointed president of the board of trade.

Nick Brown

What they predicted: On 19 May a *Guardian* editorial scoffs at "reckless" rumours that chief whip Nick Brown, an ally of Gordon Brown, might be shifted to another job. "That would amount to blood in the Treasury gutters and will not happen." This is confirmed by *Mirror* pundit Paul Routledge in his reshuffle preview on 18 July: "Who gets to stay in post? Nick Brown, the wise fixer, remains chief whip." On 26 July, Andrew Grice reports in the *Sunday Times* that although some Blairites want Nick Brown to be moved, this "would be seen as a virtual declaration of war on the Chancellor. So the word is that the chief whip will stay put, at least until next year."

What happened: One day later Nick Brown is transferred to the ministry of agriculture.

Jack Cunningham

What they predicted: One of the "most likely Cabinet casualties", according to Michael Gove of the *Times* on 23 May. "Dr Cunningham's reputation as a safe pair of hands has gone the way of the British beef industry and No 10 would be happy to see him humanely deboned." The *Mirror*'s Paul Routledge offers his assessment on 18 July: "Jack Cunningham, the Agriculture Minister, is another candidate for the chop." David Hencke of the *Guardian* takes up the refrain on 24 July: "Cabinet ministers who could lose their jobs include Jack Cunningham..."

What happened: Cunningham is promoted to the new post of "cabinet enforcer".

Ann Taylor

What they predicted: "Cabinet ministers who looked vulnerable this weekend were Commons leader Ann Taylor," David Cracknell, political editor of *Sunday Business*, reports on 26 July. Eben Black, his counterpart at the *News of the World*, concurs: "There is a serious question mark over the future of Leader of the Commons Ann Taylor, who is not seen as New Labour enough. But controversial Chief Whip Nick Brown will stay."

What happened: Ann Taylor replaces Nick Brown as chief whip, with a seat in the cabinet.

David Clark

What they predicted: "Ever since the election Dr Clark has been described as one of the most obvious candidates for the sack," Andrew Sparrow reports in the *Daily Mail* on 25 July, "but Mr Blair has been surprised to discover quite how well regarded he is by Labour MPs and now it seems increasingly possible that he will stay in the government in some capacity."

What happened: Clark is sacked.

Clare Short

What they predicted: "Tony Blair is considering axing up to a quarter of his Cabinet in a sweeping reshuffle later this month," reports Jon Craig, political editor of the *Sunday Express*, on 12 July. Likeliest victims "are thought to be Chris Smith, Clare Short, Jack Cunningham and Ann Taylor."

What happened: Clare Short, like the rest of them, remains in the cabinet.

Alan Milburn

What they predicted: Patrick Wintour of the *Observer* reports on 19 July that "Alan Milburn, the Health Secretary, is set to join the Treasury as Chief Secretary with a brief to oversee the reform of the public services." On 26 July *News of the World* political editor Eben Black declares that "high-flyer Alan Milburn is set to join the Cabinet for the first time as Chief Secretary to the Treasury".

What happened: Milburn stays in his old job.

Tony Lloyd

What they predicted: As early as 23 May, Michael Gove of the *Times* advises Lloyd to "get the air miles in" now since he will undoubtedly be sacked from his post at the foreign office. On 26 July, the eve of the reshuffle, an "exclusive" by *Sunday Express* political editor Jon Craig reveals that "one casualty of the reshuffle looks likely to be junior minister Tony Lloyd".

What happened: Lloyd keeps his job.

Mo Mowlam

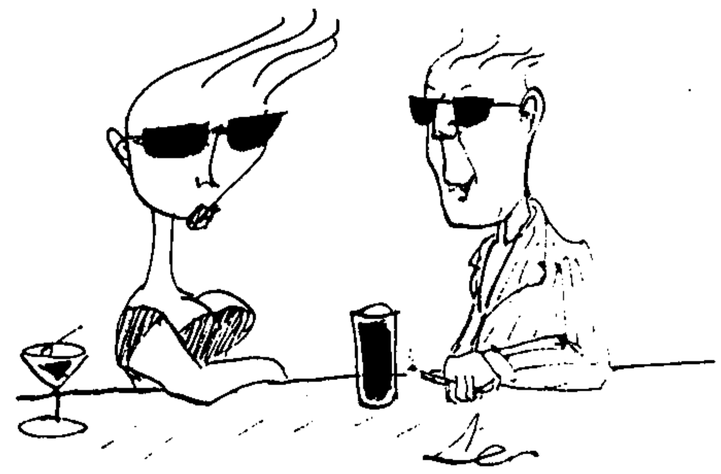
What they predicted: "Mo Mowlam was last night at the centre of fresh speculation about a government reshuffle," the excitable Kevin Maguire reports in the *Mirror* on 25 July. "A prominent Labour MP said Tony Blair will give the Ulster Secretary a new Cabinet campaigning post."

What happened: Surprise surprise, Mo Mowlam stays put.

Frank Field

What they predicted: "There is only one Labour MP apart from Mr Blair who can relax, secure in the knowledge he will not be moved," Michael Gove of the *Times* reveals on 23 May. "Although his Green Paper was less radical than advertised, Frank Field — like child benefit — can never be got rid of." On 27 July, the morning of the reshuffle, he is still secure. "Last night friends of the Welfare Reform minister Frank Field spoke of his strong loyalty to the Prime Minister," the *Daily Mail* reports, "and discounted claims that he was ready to resign."

What happened: Later that morning, after refusing to be moved to another job, Field resigns.



"You've got beautiful eyes"

IN THE TEAROOM

APART from the abrupt departure of a piqued Frank Field, the major surprise of Tony Blair's heavily leaked reshuffle was the pivotal role played by the prime minister's political secretary, Sally Morgan. It was Morgan who drew up the list of "Brownies" to be purged and who planned the coup at the treasury.

So out went Gordon's most faithful lapdog Nigel Griffiths, sacked as consumer affairs minister. Exit Doug Henderson from the foreign office, off to defence where nothing politically significant is going to happen now the review is over. Meanwhile, former chief whip Nick Brown is rusticated to agriculture.

But where Blair had originally intended only to insert Alan Milburn as a "spy in the cab" at the treasury, Morgan had bigger ideas. She argued forcefully that the only way the chancellor could be successfully brought to heel was to replace *all* his treasury team with trusted Blairites. After extensive character checks it was decided that the financial secretary, Dawn Primarolo, was loyal after all; but in went Stephen Byers as chief secretary and Patricia Hewitt as economic secretary. Morgan's plan originally provided for Geoff Hoon to replace the paymaster-general Geoffrey Robinson too.

Up until this point the chancellor had witnessed the slaughter of all his lambs with insouciance, but at the news of Hoon's impending appointment he dug in and mounted an uncompromising defence of the beleaguered Robinson. Finally, Blair softened and Hoon, who'd already been told to pack his bags at the lord chancellor's department, was given a promotion as a consolation prize.

The emergence of Morgan as a real political force also explains the odd decision to appoint the convivial dandy Jack Cunningham as cabinet office "enforcer". Cunningham is by temperament more suited to lingering over the second magnum at the Caprice than twisting arms or breaking balls. Jack will be the smiling face of the political centre, behind whom the redoubtable Morgan will continue wielding her stiletto in the shadows.

'Urquhart'

RESHUFFLE ROUND-UP

THE new economic secretary to the treasury is PATRICIA HEWITT, who has always played both sides against the middle.

She was first married to the son of a Tory MP from the landed gentry, and then to a hardline Communist who ably represented the officials of Westminster's Tory council in their battles against the district auditor.

When Neil Kinnock fought Roy Hattersley for the leadership of the Labour party in 1983, both contestants had a gushing letter from Hewitt suggesting that, if successful, they might like to choose her as press officer. Despite what Hattersley took to be a pact not to appoint her in any circumstances, Kinnock, when he won, promptly did so. He lost the next two elections.

Stephen Byers, ultra-Blairite smoothie and new chief secretary to the treasury, has a rosy future — and a political past. A former member of the International Socialists, forerunners of the Socialist Workers' Party, as a hirsute Karl Marx lookalike at Chester College of Further Education in the early 70s he was contemptuous of socialists who joined Labour, which he branded a "political corpse" and "bankrupt reformist organisation".

Students at Liverpool Poly and Newcastle Poly in the 70s will recall his ringing denunciations of politicians who try to change the world from parliament when the real power is held by multinationals. One of Byers' first tasks will be to deal with the thousands of people in Newcastle, including hundreds of his constituents, thrown out of work by German multinational Siemens which is closing the factory it opened a year ago.

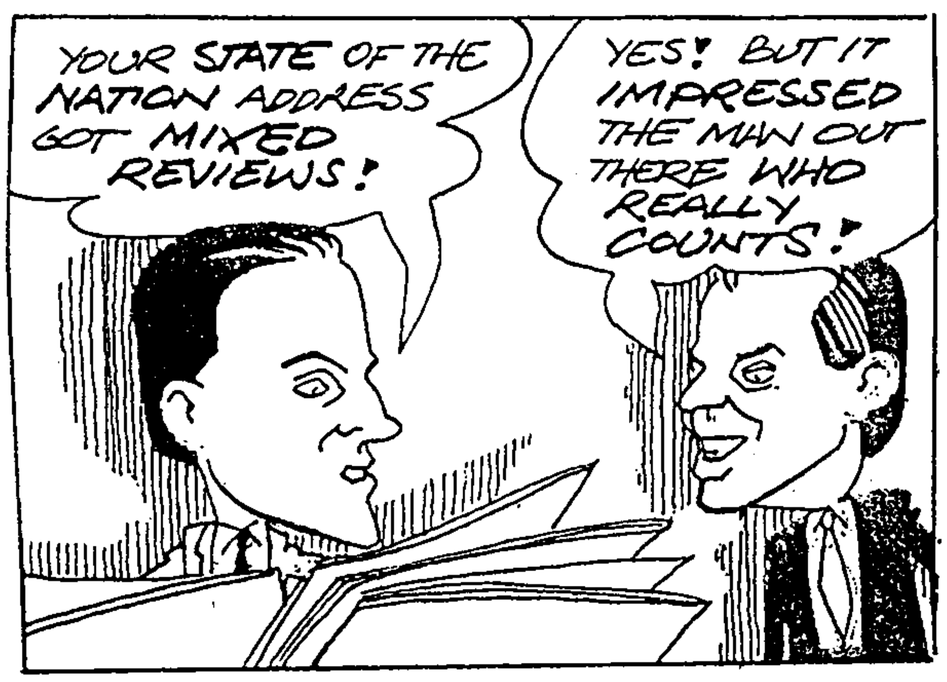
John Denham is the new Frank Field, thinking the unthinkable at the department of social security. He is still remembered for his ferocious 1970s battle against Labour's rightwing in Southampton, led by Brian Gould. Gould eventually left Labour in disgust at the party's rightward drift, especially on pensions and the welfare state — a drift that has carried Denham to high office.

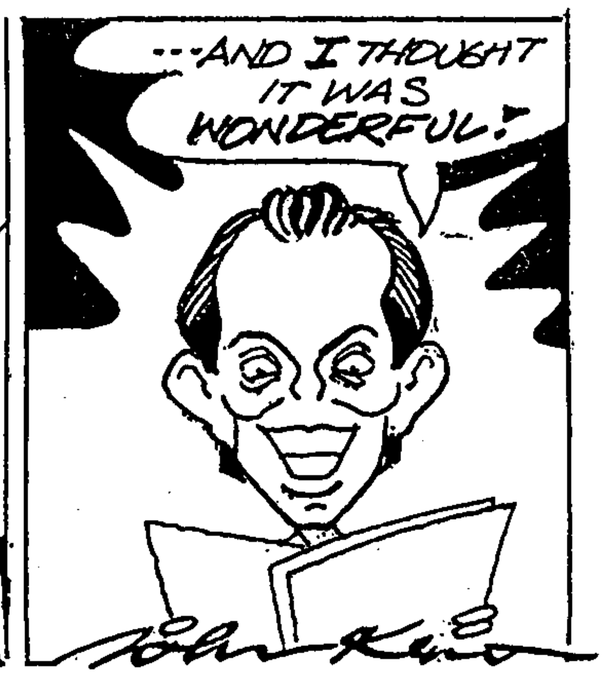
Mike O'Brien is the new minister in charge of wrecking and/or shelving the government's freedom of information bill, a reward for his slavish support as junior home office minister for the awful Group Four regime at Campsfield detention centre for asylum-seekers.

Alan Howarth is the new arts minister, a post for which he is admirably qualified since he a) knows little about art; and b) has spent most of his life in the Tory party. Mark Fisher, the arts minister he boots out, was obviously no use because he constructed the radical arts policy on which Labour fought the election and which the Labour government is quickly junking; and although his father was a Tory MP he was never one himself.

Baroness Jay's promotion to leader of the Lords has been widely applauded — not least by her old boardroom pals. While Labour was in opposition she honed her skills by joining the boards of private companies. One was the privatised utility Scottish Power, which demonstrated its social conscience by taking over Southern Water, getting rid of almost half the workers and paying chief executive Ian Robinson just £385,082 a year.

Peter Mandelson, meanwhile, was determined his triumphant elevation to the department of trade should be firmly in the media spotlight. On emerging from his meeting with the prime minister he strode majestically — but needlessly — along Downing Street and round the block to the cabinet office. Normally the Prince of Darkness takes the shorter and more convenient — but far less public — route along the internal corridor linking the two buildings.





JACK CUNNINGHAM, Tony Blair's new cabinet "enforcer", has long been known for his special relationship with the nuclear power people at Sellafield (he's the MP for Copeland). Less well-known is his cosiness with the chemical industry.

The 1996 register of MPs' interests revealed that he received £30,000 before the previous election for "advising" three private companies. One of them, chemical firm Albright & Wilson, paid £10,000 for "advice on contacts with ministers and others with whom we do not normally have meetings".

It's not entirely clear what Albright & Wilson wanted to talk about, but one clue may be the firm's membership of the Chemical Industries Association, which at that time was lobbying for deregulation. Albright & Wilson quickly demonstrated how little regulation a trustworthy company like itself needed: within months of the revelation of its link with Cunningham, its Bristol plant exploded, releasing a cloud of toxic hydrogen chloride that closed both bridges across the Severn.

WHILE the resignation of Stella McCartney from FCO Committee 2000, Robin Cook's absurd "cool Britannia" talking shop, is embarrassing, it's the people who remain who are more alarming.

Baroness Blackstone is one of two baronesses on the committee — itself hardly a sign of modernity — and her particular contribution to a "young country" is to pilot the student fees bill through the Lords. As a result her appearances are often marred by stage invasions from student protesters. The latest development is that students at the Institute of Education have sought to revoke her honorary membership of the students' union.

Roger Liddle, famously a former lobbyist for Prima Europe, is another remaining committee member. So expect Britain to be rebranded as "the country that likes to say yes (to all major credit cards)".

MORE on the link between lobbying firm GJW Government Relations and the mercenaries involved in the arms-to-Sierra Leone furore, Sandline International.

Nigel Williams, ambassador and permanent UK representative to the United Nations, was questioned by the UN's special rapporteur investigating the use of mercenaries. He was asked about Executive Outcomes, an associate company of Sandline International; and Williams told the UN official that "other Executive Outcomes-affiliated companies are Heritage Oil and Gas, GJW Government Relations and Capricorn Air."

Since foreign secretary Robin Cook has ruled that no government official must talk to the representatives of private armies, does this mean GJW Government Relations is barred from relations with civil servants?

REVELATIONS about Derek Draper and his ilk have left knees knocking in Scotland where the names of a number of lobbying firm directors are strikingly similar to those of candidates for the Scottish parliament.

Labour has most snouts in the trough with Mike Watson — now Lord Watson of Invergowrie — doing rather nicely as a director of PS Communications consultants. Former general secretary of the Scottish Labour party Jack McConnell has acquired himself a nice little earner with Public Affairs Europe. And Jane Saren, an aspiring Edinburgh candidate, is the managing director for GPC Market Access in Scotland. One new company, Holyrood Strategy, was to be led by former Glasgow lord provost Michael Kelly; but he resigned just before its ill-timed launch in the week of the revelations.

Other parties are not exempt from the lobbying bug. Dennis Sullivan of PS Communications and Charles Brodie of Holyrood Strategy are aspiring LibDem candidates; Struan Stevenson plans to stand as a Tory candidate although he works for PS Communications; and Lord Fraser of Carmylie has eagerly taken the lead role in Holyrood Strategy after Kelly's resignation.

Fraser used to be a leading figure in the campaign to stop the Scottish parliament in the referendum.

ORDER OF THE BACKBENCH BROWN NOSE

IN THE last prime minister's questions before the Tuscan exodus, Labour's Rosemary McKenna (Cumbernauld & Kilsyth) played a blinder.

Her question obeyed the three principal rules of the backbench brown nose genre: one, that Tony should be grossly flattered for each and any achievement made in His name; two, that a quick pop at the opposition must be included; and three, that the whole should be dressed up in soundbite language that renders whatever point being made utterly meaningless.

"My Right Honourable Friend will be aware that those of us involved in working with local partnerships to develop the New Deal very much welcome this week's announcement of help for homeless young people to have early access to the New Deal. Does he agree that that will give many thousands of young people hope for the future for the first time in a long time?"

Tone, aware that every moment of greasiness delays sparky encounters with the growing awkward squad on his backbenches (Frank Field, Birkenhead, etc), was happy to share Mckenna's delight. Yes, he confirmed: whatever it was she was on about he was dead chuffed about it too.

MEANWHILE Scottish education minister Brian Wilson has also been in the news for surprisingly refusing to act on the proposed closure of a rural primary school on the outskirts of his birthplace, Dunoon — despite announcing earlier this year that rural primary schools shouldn't be closed.

The closure of Rashfield primary was driven forward by local council leader Dick Walsh, despite a strong local campaign and a previous campaign five years ago led by, er, Dick Walsh.

Wilson's silence on the matter is surely not due to the fact that the wife of the SNP's chief executive Michael Russell is the school's head teacher. Nor is it because Wilson, in his student days, worked on a milk float in Dunoon delivering pints alongside his pal the float driver — one Dick Walsh.

ARCHIE NORMAN's axe is falling at Conservative central office. Under the direction of his henchman Peter Samuel — an active Liberal Democrat, bizarrely enough, who fought Reigate for his party in last year's general election — there have been sackings galore.

At Lib Dem HQ, Samuel's colleagues can hardly contain their amusement. But "Archie", as Norman insists on being called by anyone who can actually find him in Smith Square, may be losing his touch. At a recent meeting attended by the dwindling band of central office staff, he announced excitedly that to date a grand total of 600 new members had joined the party.

Perhaps he has forgotten William Hague's promise, on being elected leader, that he would double the membership from 300,000 to 600,000 within two years. With only one year to go, there is obviously still some work to do.

'Backbiter'

£10 million — Number crunching

■ amount that Sir Clive Thompson, chief executive of Rentokil Initial, claims would be wiped off the profits of the company by the introduction of a minimum wage

■ value of share option profits in the company held by Sir Clive Thompson

NOOKS and CORNERS

THE nine volumes of English Heritage's new illustrated *Buildings at Risk* registers are a riveting read as the range of buildings neglected almost comprise a history of English architecture.

Some entries are surprisingly ancient and special. One entry is Shaw House at Donnington, near Newbury. This is a large and splendid Elizabethan mansion of brick and stone, completed in 1581 — just the sort of historic building people love and that deserves looking after.

But, alas, having been used as a school for ages it is owned by the local authority, West Berkshire council. And since 1986 Shaw House has been left empty: structural problems were encountered, the building was vacated, fine panelling was stripped from the internal walls and left stacked in the rooms. Proposals by the former Berkshire county council to repair the building, find an alternative use, sell it off to somebody who might look after it, all came to nothing; and recently an application to the heritage lottery fund was rejected.

So why is nobody prepared to take on this beautiful building? It stands in a wealthy and desirable part of the world, after all. Because Shaw House is surrounded by school buildings, both permanent and "temporary", which are still in use and which blight the site and disfigure the 16th century mansion. The answer to this problem is surely simple: close Shaw House School, remove the buildings and sell the historic house.

But the new West Berkshire council has other, more imaginative and positive ideas. Last month its education committee decided to close down two schools and build a new one. The schools to be closed are the nearby Turnpike School and, yes, Shaw House School, and the new school is to be built on the... Shaw House site. So new school buildings are to be added to the existing school buildings which blight the grade I listed building, making its restoration even less likely. Well done, West Berks: local authority common sense triumphs again.

IN THE fat London volume of the Buildings at Risk register, several buildings at Greenwich were included, like the Dreadnought Seamen's Hospital and the Nurses Home — both part of the Royal Naval College complex. In fact, perhaps the college itself should have been included, as the future of the greatest set-piece of Baroque architecture in Britain, the masterpiece of Sir Christopher Wren and others, remains a worry.

I have described before how this glorious set of buildings, designed for and used by the royal navy, was cavalierly abandoned by the last government — a foolish and expensive decision now endorsed by the present one (Eyes passim). But we are told we should not worry as the Greenwich Foundation has been set up to safeguard its future.

And this foundation has decided that while the chapel and the Painted Hall will remain open to the public, the rest of the buildings can be leased to the so-called University of Greenwich. Now the worry here is not that the chairman of the Greenwich Foundation is that ornament to English public life, Sir Angus Stirling, who presided over the management and future plans of the Royal Opera House with such conspicuous success, but rather the nature of the tenant to whom these most precious and glorious historic buildings are to be entrusted.

The University of Greenwich used to be the South East London Polytechnic — one of those second-rate institutions dumbed up by Margaret Thatcher in her successful war against standards in higher education. Few — least of all members of staff — seem to think this "university" is a suitable occupant of the Royal Naval College, and it already wants to make extensive internal alterations and erect covered walkways across the Grand Square. English Heritage will have to approve, of course, but then it failed to stop panelling being ripped out of the listed building at Avery Hill by the poly. Buildings at Risk indeed.

'Piloti'

SCHOOL REPORT 1

COMPARE and contrast the following two statements.

"We will not sign up to Private Finance Initiative (PFI) plans unless we are convinced that they will carry the support of parents." (Jack Straw, seeking reelection as chairman of the governors at Pimlico School, November 1997.)

"It is not possible to give a mandate to an elected representative in a democracy: you cannot delegate the decision-making process." (Jack Straw, to parents who elected him, Pimlico School, July 1998.)

Following the 155-6 vote of parents against the demolition of their school, Straw unveiled his "New Labour, New Democrat" policy at a fiery meeting with them two weeks ago. Asked why he had failed to uphold his manifesto commitment by voting for demolition, he explained that he was in fact staunchly defending the views of the "silent majority" who were apparently drooling at the prospect of having their children educated on a building site for the next four years. Even a massive vote of no-confidence in Straw by the parents failed to dent his confidence that he represented their views.

PS: Straw's steamrollering of PFI against the wishes of parents, staff and pupils is of course quite unrelated to the government's recent announcement that capital spending in education using PFI money will increase from under 1 per cent to 32 percent (£660m) over the next three years.

PPS: Jack Straw's wife, Alice Perkins, is deputy director of public spending at the treasury.

PPPS: Last month, as chairman of the Committee on the Family, Straw announced a three-year development fund to finance "mentor" schemes. The director of the National Mentoring Consortium is Norman McLean OBE, who in his spare time is a governor at Pimlico School. Until seven weeks ago McLean was expressing grave doubts about Straw's bulldozing plans; but at the governors' decisive meeting of 11 July, he did an about turn and voted with chairman Jack.

Worry on educaion

Express & Star

SCHOOL REPORT 2

ADMIRERS of her majesty's chief inspector of schools, Chris Woodhead, are rallying to him.

Woodhead fan-in-chief John Clare, education correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, published a story on 30 July. "Bangladeshi Pupils Defy the Sceptics" was the headline under a huge and glamorous picture of the headmistress of Kobi Nazrul primary school in east London with two of her enthusiastic pupils.

The school, wrote Clare, has "been highlighted" by Ofsted for the wonderful performance of its pupils, half of whom had free school meals — "an indication of severe disadvantage". Clare trumpeted: "The findings strongly support Mr Woodhead's refusal to accept the 'bleakly determined' view that little can be expected of schools in disadvantaged areas."

Clare's article described the Kobi Nazrul headmistress Ruth Miskin as "companion" to Chris Woodhead. "Companion" is coy *Daily Telegraphspeak* for "live-in lover". Clare made no reference to the previous occasions in which Woodhead and his publicists have hauled out his lover to proclaim the triumph of his theories. Last year a video was made and sold by Ofsted once again featuring the glories of Kobi Nazrul.

The day after Clare's article, the full Ofsted figures were published on the front page of the *TES*. They showed that the primary schools condemned as failures were "overwhelmingly those in areas with high levels of poverty" and "the poorest 10 percent of schools in the country are eight times more likely to fail their inspections than schools with average levels of poverty or better."

The figures were not published in the *Daily Telegraph*.

EYE TV

Changing Rooms (BBC1)
Newsnight (BBC2)
Verdict (ITV)
Trial By Jury (BBC2)

LAST week there was an unusual event in television: a popular series entirely changed its nature overnight.

Changing Rooms — in which neighbours preside over the decoration of a room in each other's house, with professional help — has always been one of television's wish-fulfilment shows. One of the arrogant assumptions of the people who run TV has always been that the viewers are dull and unfulfilled creatures whose lives can be improved by the medium's intervention.

The numerous makeover shows are the natural extension of this prejudice. So *Style Challenge* will sort out your hair and clothes, *Ground Force* will landscape your garden and *Changing Room* will show you an alternative to your tasteless decor.

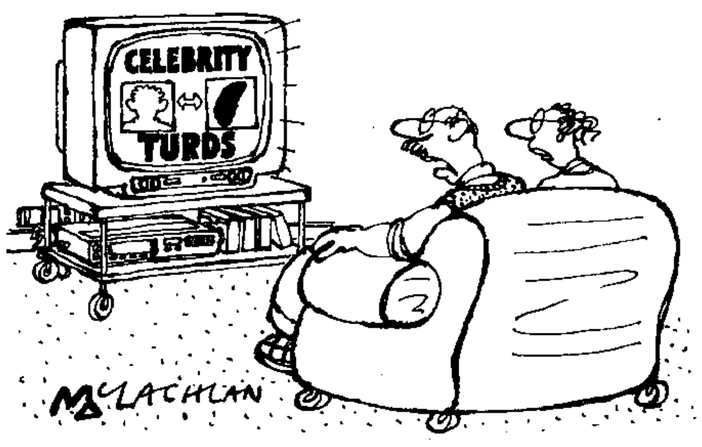
Last week, though, was the much-publicised episode in which a couple broke down in tears when they witnessed the gothic camp transformation enacted on their drawing room by the designer. And so, with icy opportunism, the BBC reclassified what had been a gentle Cinderella-makeover show as a Jeremy Beadle-style gotcha series. "Warning," intoned the continuity announcer. "Beware of who comes to your house!"

The episode made riveting viewing. It was clear throughout that the professional designers were wilfully ignoring the instructions of the civilians to create their own cherished concept. This had the effect of exposing the unpleasant undertone of all makeover shows, which is that the participants should be grateful for being educated in taste by a pro.

But the BBC now has a problem. Where does *Changing Rooms*, one of its most popular shows, go from here? The audience will now expect tears and dismay every week. It's going to have to become a gotcha series, in which enemies are invited to redecorate each other's rooms in bad taste. But the episode was a rarity to be treasured: a show's format transforming as you watched.

The hostess of *Changing Rooms*, Carol Smillie, a Scot with an angular face, looks a little like Kirsty Wark, but she sensibly hasn't exaggerated the comparison, developing mannerisms of her own and fronting different kinds of programmes. A young current affairs broadcaster, however, has not understood that impersonations on television are best left to Rory Bremner. *Newsnight* (BBC2) is currently offering one of the comic treats of the summer, as Jeremy Vine fills in for Jeremy Paxman.

The baptismal foresight of Vine's parents already means that the programme only needs to pay for half of a new caption. But Mr Vine, approaching the role of stand-in presenter with unprecedented pedantry, has sought to ensure that viewers will not even notice Paxman is away.



"So — the dumbing-down continues."

Tall and dark-haired, he reads the autocue with Paxo's trademark grimace of disdain for the way the world is going, lolls back in his chair during interviews, asking questions with a grumpy abruptness then scarcely suppressing a yawn as he listens to the answer. If imitation really is the sincerest form of flattery, the vacationing Paxo should be collapsing under the weight of the compliments.

Vine, a talented reporter in his own right, should consider the fate of other clones in broadcasting. Steve Rider's attempted impersonation of Des Lynam keeps him on the lower rungs of sports broadcasting, but he will be pipped for the next top spot by John Inverdale, a young contender who has picked up tips from Lynam but developed his own style. Vine may be flattered that he and Paxo are now known in the *Newsnight* office as "Big Jeremy" and "Little Jeremy", but he shouldn't be. It's the kiss of death to his ambitions to be a presenter.

Another case of would-be lookalikes involves programmes. With *Verdict* and *Trial By Jury* respectively, ITV and BBC2 are both attempting updates of *Crown Court*, the old lunchtime legal procedural. Both series use 12 ordinary people as the jury, but, where *Verdict* employs actors as barristers and judge, *Trial By Jury* uses professional lawyers.

The ITV programme controller David Liddiment recently expressed a desire to take the network upmarket in pursuit of more ABC1 viewers. Yet this collision of scheduling across the channels shows the problems that ITV has in producing upmarket drama. Although nearly identical in concept, the two courtroom series are radically different in execution.

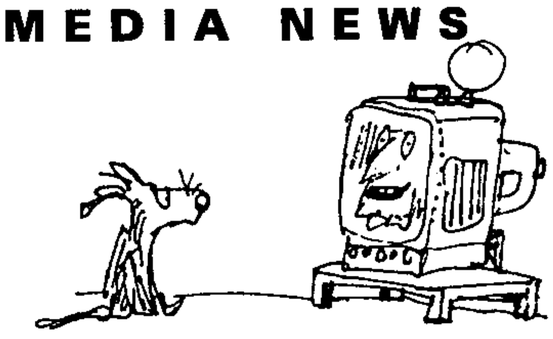
BBC2's version is low-key, thoughtful, able to offer real insights into the construction of a barrister's case through the use of professionals, but also able to achieve a realistic representation of witnesses by the use of little known actors. The show is permitted such liberties by its late-night slot.

ITV's version, asked to deliver multi-millions in peak-time, is garish and melodramatic. There is no sense of legal realism because counsel and witnesses are played by famous television faces, in order to attract viewers and advertisers. The crucial question which the viewer-juror needs to ask — is this person pretending? — is impossible because we're all too aware that they are.

Whatever Liddiment's ambitions, *Verdict* is a good example of the in-built pressure driving ITV products downmarket. It's also a telling illustration of the history of ITV that *Crown Court* — serious and well-crafted — used to be wasted on daytime TV, while *Verdict*, tacky and cheap-looking, is what now plays in peak time.

'Square Eyes'

MEDIA NEWS



THE publication of corporate newsletters has become a spectacular growth industry at the BBC's new White City news centre — to the dismay of cramped hacks whose shared bins now overflow with reams of expensively produced drivel.

The traditional 16 weekly pages of *Ariel* now jostle for bin space alongside 12 high-gloss colour pages of *EQ*, regularly celebrating "Equality and Diversity in BBC Broadcast and Production", as well as the monthly heavy card, full colour *Worldview* newsletter from BBC Worldwide, regularly celebrating "A Landmark Period for BBC Worldwide", not to mention the glossy, shrink-wrapped full-colour travesty, *Around Resources*, regularly celebrating "Putting the Customer 1st".

Now there's new competition in the shape of *News Quarterly*, already a high production value, 24-page heavy-paper addition to the skips alongside Main Despatch. Billed as "The journal for BBC news" it contains spectacular puffs for BBC management, culminating in this issue's "My Life as a Suit" by Richard Clemmow, head of news programmes. In it Clemmow explains enthusiastically his vital role "trying to wrestle an £80 million budget down to meet tough savings targets whilst producing some of the best broadcast journalism in the world".

Clearly these "tough savings targets" don't include the cost of the 30-plus senior editorial posts tied up providing all this solipsistic *arslikhan*, nor the production and distribution costs involved in piling up hard copies of information already available to hacks both on the internet and on the corporation's own lavish News Intranet service. Hats off to the licence-payer for such amazing generosity.

> Long known to be interested in a television presenting career, Geri was seen having lunch with the presenter and executive Christ Evans. *Independent*

SO farewell, then, *Cumbrian Tales*, the BBC2 docu-soap about life in the village of Ireby and its local pub, Paddy's Bar.

The last *Eye* revealed that the series producer Patrick McCreanor was also the owner of Paddy's Bar. And on Wednesday 22 July, the day the *Eye* hit the streets, the programme was pulled due to a "potential conflict of interest" which contradicted the BBC's own Producer Guidelines.

Curiously this was reported a day later in the *Daily Mail* as "an obvious conflict of interest uncovered by a *Daily Mail* investigation". How strange!

HERE's a short extract from a letter in *Pravda* (aka *Ariel*) from someone at BBC Northampton: "*Diana: My Sister the Princess* — the BBC programme to which the rest of the BBC was denied access; *Lakesiders* — the BBC programme that gives prime time publicity to a BBC outlet's opposition (any explanation of this yet forthcoming?); *Cumbrian Tales* — the BBC programme pulled because no one rumbled a conflict of interest. More information about all of the above in *Private Eye* than in *Ariel*. What is going on?"

JUST FANCY THAT!

Quizmaster: "Who is the current leader of the Ku Klux Klan?"
Contestant: "The Duke of Edinburgh."
— *African Quiz, BBC African Service, 4 July 1998.*

THE *Collins English Dictionary* **defines "Independent" thus: "not dependent on anything else for function, validity, etc; separate; not reliant on the support, esp. financial support, of others."**

How, one wonders, does this apply to the supposedly "independent" TV production company Imago Ltd, based in Norwich? To be more precise, Imago is situated in the former Royal Hotel, which also happens to be the HQ of Lord Hollick's Anglia Television. Dial Anglia TV on 01603 615151, ask for Imago, and an obliging operator puts you through.

Imago has been remarkably successful in gaining commissions from Anglia in the face of competition from other independent producers in the region, some of whom are facing ruin for lack of work.

Some Anglia staff who have been assigned to work on Imago's dismal productions are unhappy about this state of affairs, but nervous of speaking out. For there is an even more striking connection between Imago and Anglia than the shared address and phone number. Imago's boss and proprietor is one Vivica Parsons — whose husband, Graham Creelman, just happens to be the managing director of Anglia TV.

Plugged In

Sky reckon the baggy-eyed star with his "And Why Not" catchphrase will have new viewers flocking to their multi-million pound channels Sky Premier, Sky MovieMax and Sky Cinema. Elisabeth Murdoch, Sky's general manager of broadcasting, said: "In any one evening there will be 25 channels to choose from. That represents a true revolution in movie choice."

The Sun

CONTRIBUTOR: Neil Curtis

An occasional column devoted to cross-media plugs masquerading as news.

IMPOSSIBLE as it might seem but ITV's *Diana: The Secrets Behind the Crash* is looking even less credible now than it did when first broadcast.

Facing a barrage of criticism for the programme's trashiness, producer Richard Belfield and ITV commissioner Steve Anderson hid behind their "exclusive evidence" that an eyewitness had seen a bright light in the tunnel just before the crash.

That witness, lorry driver Francois Levistre, has now confessed to the *People* that actually it was probably him who caused the crash after all with his erratic and dangerous driving.

This is the third change of story by M. Levistre, whose account of events had been dismissed by police early in the investigation due to its obvious inconsistencies. Far from being a reliable witness, it appears M Levistre may actually be a desperate publicity freak anxious to profit from the death of the princess by peddling all manner of implausible and contradictory theories — which is, of course, a million miles from the intention of Mr Belfield and ITV.

HEADS have rolled at BBC Online, the corporations's internet division.

With £30m spent and little to show, Ed Briffa, the former *Tomorrow's World* producer, has been shown the door, a few days after fronting the online efforts for the Feedback program.

Briffa came to the job with no knowledge or experience... but a blank cheque book, resulting in web pages 40 times as expensive as comparable web sites.

SUNDAY TIMES TV critic A.A. Gill is well known for his caustic opinions. But in his review of ITV's admittedly dire *Babes in the Wood* he was particularly scornful about the appearances and talents of its three female stars: "Dogs", "Bottle Blondes", etc, etc.

All this was identified as the fault of the actresses rather than the script, which could presumably have been handled far better by another more talented, sexier, blonder star — someone like, say, Nicola Formby, Gill's other half, who auditioned for the show but failed to be cast. Gill somehow fails to mention this fact.

ARTS COUNCIL chairman and "new" Labour strategist Gerry Robinson can't wait for digital television to take off.

In his alternative role as chairman of Granada plc, Robinson wants the Blair regime to switch off the current terrestrial transmission system as soon as possible — and certainly before 2005. This would force everybody to throw out their existing tv sets and videos and upgrade to fantastic new digital receivers.

Naturally Gerry's motives for encouraging the government to go digital are entirely altruistic: Gordon Brown can raise money by auctioning off the existing terrestrial frequencies to mobile phone operators; and viewers can enjoy all that exciting new pay per view programming that they've always made clear they don't actually want. It has nothing whatsoever to do with Robinson's control of the Granada TV shops, where people might in due course be able to get their new digital equipment.

LEGAL NEWS

IT MUST surely be time for Mr Justice Popplewell to hang up his wig. His memory is clearly failing him.

The judge has allowed disgraced former Tory MP Neil Hamilton to sue Mohamed Fayed, owner of Harrods, despite protests that the issue at stake — whether brown envelopes passed between the two men — has been comprehensively decided by the House of Commons' committee on standards.

The "proper place" for the matter to be decided, intoned Mr Justice Popplewell, was "before a judge and jury". Surely before he sounds off like this the judge should remember important precedents — like the celebrated case of Jonathan Aitken v. the *Guardian*, in which a learned judge decided that the matters at stake were far too complicated for ordinary citizens and should be determined by a judge sitting alone.

The name of the judge sounds familiar: er, Mr Justice Popplewell.

LEADING Liverpool lawyers Julian Linskill and Robert Broudie — who caused so much amusement three years ago when they reported each other to the police for assault in the city's Bridewell (*Eye* 874) — are back in the news.

Their undignified set-to came when they were defending rival gangsters in the aftermath of the David Ungi murder; and the Linskill v. Broudie match was likened to a contest between a peacock and rodent.

Now the well-preened Linskill has got himself into trouble by arguing with the beak over legal aid at Wigan magistrates' court. For his pains, Linskill was sent to the cells for four hours to cool off. When he emerged his car had been given a parking ticket.

Meanwhile Broudie (brother of *Three Lions* Lightning Seed Ian — is trying to overturn an industrial tribunal ruling against his firm for sexual discrimination, after former employee Sheena Khan was jailed for six months for forging documents — even though he admitted calling at her home in Allerton at the unbusinesslike hour of 1.45am.

COUNTRY MATTERS

FOLLOWING recent *Eye* revelations about the Countryside Alliance, £15,000 was spent hiring PR troubleshooter David Burnside to salvage the image of its sinister new chief executive, Edward "Papa" Duke.

Alas! As with other Burnside clients — including the Ulster Unionists, British Airways, Yasser Arafat and Owen Oyston — the intervention did little good. Last Wednesday Duke quit, only a fortnight after the resignation of his bumbling chairman, former Tory MP Charles Goodson-Wickes.

"It became clear to me as the strategy planning discussions evolved," Duke explained, "that the organisation did not require a person of my business experience."

In fact, it was not his "experience" that made Duke unpopular. What provoked such fury among alliance supporters was his astonishing £200,000 a year pay package and his sacking of the high-profile press officer Janet George. Eyebrows were also raised at Duke's insistence on taking a holiday in Spain even though it meant missing the first two days of the prestigious Country Land-owners' game fair at the Duke of Wellington's estate.

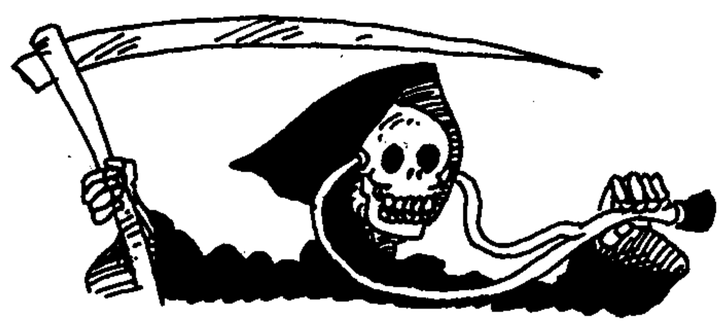
When Duke eventually turned up on the final day it proved to be a disaster, with Burnside taking over a press conference to interrupt and answer most of the questions directed at the tongue-tied chief executive.

Further investigations by the *Eye* reveal that Duke wasn't even working full-time for his lavish salary. Before he was appointed in May he demanded the right to spend almost a day a week on his other interests. The then chairman Goodson-Wickes secretly agreed, and thus Duke continued drawing at least £20,000 a year as a director of troubled ceramics group Beauford plc, and a similar sum from the Bradford agrochemicals firm A. H. Marks, whose chairman paid himself a modest £1m bonus last year. Lucky old "Papa" Duke will now have plenty of time to pursue these worthy causes.

MODESTY UPDATE

"I hate the luvvies. I'm fed up with them slagging us off. They go on about their fine arts. Look, I'm involved in fine art too, you know. Actually I'm infinitely better at it than the Peter Halls."

ALAN PARKER
The Observer



DOING THE ROUNDS

Re Joyce! Re Joyce!

LIONEL JOYCE, chief executive of Newcastle City Health NHS Trust (NCHNT) and member of a government think-tank, was given an OBE by Tony Blair in June. So how does he cope with union activists? A recent industrial tribunal brought against his trust gives some idea.

In 1996 the Tory government did away with entirely nationally negotiated pay awards for NHS staff and introduced an element of locally awarded pay. In theory this was performance-related, but in practice it meant virtually nothing: most NHS trusts were (and still are) broke.

Staff at NCHNT rejected a total increase of 2.75 percent and managers said they could not negotiate locally because two unions — the GMB and Royal College of Nursing — had not signed an agreement to allow it. Staff walked out, the problems could not be resolved in further meetings and relations between the trust and some of the unions deteriorated badly.

Yunus Bakhsh is a registered mental health nurse and at the time was working within the Hadrian Clinic at Newcastle General Hospital. In 1995 he was appointed joint branch secretary of UNISON and is a member of the Trust Staff Side, responsible for negotiating terms and conditions with local managers throughout the trust. He is the one who ended up going to a tribunal.

In the summer of 1996 Bakhsh's agreed time for union duties was eight hours a week. On 6 September it was announced that a UNISON ballot had resulted in a vote for strike action over pay, and on 18 September Bakhsh visited the hospital laundry to discuss the action with the mainly non-union workers during their lunch break. On 19 September he attended the young people's unit on union business and was slightly late for work on Bewick ward, without the prior agreement of the ward manager. He was the most senior member of staff on the ward at that time, although a competent staff nurse was on duty in the adjacent depot clinic.

During the shift Bakhsh was called back to the laundry to assist a UNISON member who had been greatly upset by her supervisor. He was unable to seek permission from his line managers who were at a meeting three miles away. Bakhsh had a "heated discussion" with the supervisor and was absent for no more than an hour. His absence was considered by four managers and it was decided that no action should be taken against him. However, a number of the non-union laundry workers wrote and signed seven letters of complaint about the way Bakhsh had addressed them, ranging from intimidation, offering to pay them to take part in the strike and using the term "blackleg". The subsequent industrial tribunal found the latter two allegations to be "inherently unlikely".

Members of UNISON went on strike on 23 September, receiving considerable publicity and causing much disruption despite the minimum level of cover. Two days later, Bakhsh was called to a supervision session with his ward manager, Ms Delia Aldridge, who described his performance as nurse in charge of Bewick ward as poor, suggesting he lacked commitment and that his union duties were interfering with his nursing. Specific mention was made of his absence on 19 September "putting staff and clients at risk", but as no immediate action was taken at the time by the management, it cannot have constituted serious professional misconduct.

UNISON planned four more days of strike action in October and the trust went to the high court claiming irregularities in the ballot. In an affidavit sworn by director of resources Moira Rankin, she claimed that during the first strike (on 23 September) "there were some unpleasant incidents around the hospital, in particular at the laundry where staff who had defied the union were harangued on their departure." The industrial tribunal found this allegation "wholly inaccurate".

In November Bakhsh signed "an extremely critical and robust" letter demanding the investigation of two managers for their treatment of two members of staff. Shortly afterwards Ms Rankin decided to investigate Mr Bakhsh's "unacceptable behaviour towards trust managers" as well as the alleged incidents with the laundry staff. He was suspended by the trust as a UNISON rep. It was also decided without consultation at board level to transfer him to another site — a move which greatly distressed Bakhsh and was considered as "punishment and substantial humiliation". He refused to accept the transfer and was suspended on full pay.

Worse was to come. UNISON decided to hold a strike ballot over his suspension, as did the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists. On 3 February 1997, Lionel Joyce publicly weighed into the debate by sending a letter to each member of the society. It started: "I hope you already know the facts about the 'Yunus Bakhsh' case but if not, the following brief summary may help. The trust received written complaints from female members of staff alleging harassment and intimidation by Yunus Bakhsh..."

The industrial tribunal found this "quite extraordinary". "The reference to the gender of the laundry workers, which had no relevance at all, would have indicated to those who did not know otherwise that the harassment was alleged to have been of a sexual nature." Joyce then went on to breach confidentiality by revealing details of the investigation into his professional conduct.

The decision to require Bakhsh to face a disciplinary hearing was taken by Joyce. It took place five months after the alleged events and was so "seriously flawed" that it was abandoned half way through. At this point Bakhsh decided he had had enough and took the trust to a tribunal which unsurprisingly upheld all his complaints. However, Mr Joyce chose not to testify in person to the subsequent industrial tribunal and has yet to be called to account for his actions. But he still has Mr Blair's OBE.

M.D.

SIGNAL FAILURES

Focus on Prism Rail

JOHN PRESCOTT's new transport policy, espousing improved public transport to replace many car journeys, faces big obstacles. Not least Prism Rail.

When the franchises were handed out, Prism, a consortium of everyday bus managers, had no pre-existing business. To justify the directors' stockmarket ambitions, Prism had to secure several franchises at any cost. Its offer to run two in the south-west for desperately low subsidies was accepted by the franchise office. Passengers are now counting the cost.

The predecessors of Wales and West Railway and Cardiff Railway had defied sharp falls in subsidy with an explosion of services and big growth in passengers. But privatisation put development on hold, and Prism Rail then shunted it into the sidings for good. While almost all other franchises promised new services or trains, Prims promised no substantial upgrades and no new trains.

But forget upgrades: Prism is struggling to maintain even the services it inherited. Faced with an acute shortage of drivers this summer, managers opted to keep their profitable long-distance routes going while heaping cancellations on commuters and regular travellers on local routes: eg 21 services cancelled in two days at Llanelli last month. The lot of Bristol commuters was so appalling even the local rail users' consultative committee, stuffed with Tory appointees, conceded that passengers had had enough.

But Prism was upsetting passengers *before* the driver shortage. Complaints to the rail committees against Cardiff Railway rose 470 percent last winter — faster than complaints against any other franchise. Although Wales and West saw complaints jump from 194 to 725 (taking it to second in the table of complaints per million journeys), its md David Weir recently told the Railway Development Society: "We are trying to turn our passengers into fans of our company."

Meanwhile passengers on Prism's London franchises were no happier, LTS Rail recording a 186 percent rise. Complaints against West Anglia Great Northern Railway (WAGN) fell slightly, but the franchise still generates more complaints per million journeys than any other London commuter franchise.

Such dissatisfaction is understandable. One passenger who missed her train because of a massive queue for tickets at her local station had waited 24 minutes before being served by the lone member of staff. Instead of promising to increase staff, WAGN told the woman to "arrive earlier at the station" or "join the train without a ticket and risk incurring a penalty fare".

Prism could not afford to increase staff and other resources because it needed to declare a healthy profit for 1997-98 to enable it to float successfully on the stockmarket. Its pre-tax profit of £16.6m was achieved with the help of various measures: such as a leap from £282 to £470 for car-park season tickets at at least one LTS Rail station. Cardiff Railway appealed to rail enthusiasts for spare diesel locos to keep its prime commuter services running, and a voluntary passengers' association in Wales which regularly produced its own guide to train times and fares — to encourage people to use the local trains — has been told Wales and West will no longer offer its usual grant of £30 (sic).

Money is so tight Wales and West weeded out the services of all other train operators in its summer timetable, including Central Trains, the franchise's *partner* on one route. The book, reportedly the brainchild of David Weir, gives passengers such a distorted view of services it has been acclaimed as Britain's worst timetable.

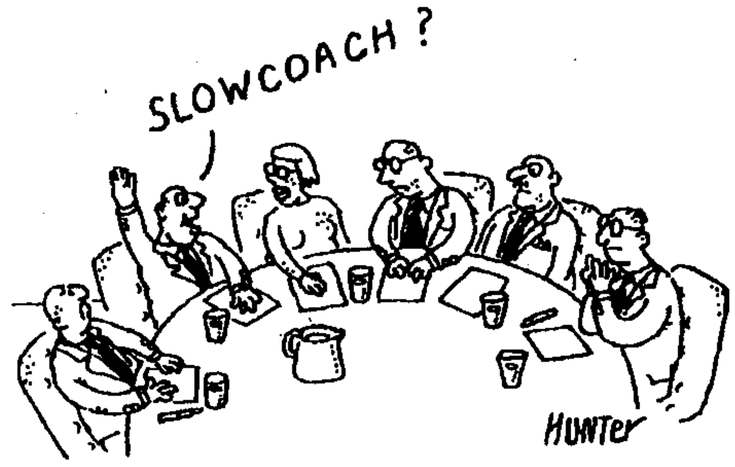
'Dr B. Ching'

JUST FANCY THAT!

JOHN PRESCOTT has the full backing of Gerald Kaufman MP in his bid to encourage people to make better use of public transport.

When asked about visiting the millennium dome he tells the BBC: "Hanging on in an Underground train that is unpleasantly crowded, maybe with children or pensioners, will not be a pleasant start."

How very true.



The Stagecoach/Virgin Rail re-branding Think Tank

INGLORIOUS TWELFTH

SIR Tom Cowie, founder of the transport conglomerate that until recently bore his name, is looking forward to the Glorious Twelfth.

He leases the County Durham moors of Holwick and Wemmergill from Lord Strathmore and runs a grouse shoot which in a good year turns over around £1m. Last year it produced nearly 10,000 brace of grouse. It is a pretty noisy place in the shooting season, as hundreds of upper-class twits gather to blast the birds from the sky.

Now consider the fate of one small Northumbrian clay pigeon shoot, Stobbilee Shooting Ground. Owner Dave Robson applied for planning permission to hold shoots on more than 28 days a year. Local planners were preparing to rubber-stamp the application, when a single objection was raised. The noise from the clay pigeon shoot would make the concerned householder's life "intolerable", he claimed, even though his home was more than a mile away. Mr Robson's application was turned down. Not being able to afford an expensive legal battle, he threw in the towel and closed the ground.

All of which was a satisfactory outcome for the complainant — one Sir Tom Cowie, well-known champion of shooters' rights.

Rotten Boroughs

Rhondda Cynon Taff

THE saga of Nantygwyddon waste tip, owned by Rhondda Cynon Taff council's company, Rhondda Waste Disposal (RWD), is growing messier and more expensive (see *Eyes passim*).

RWD was set up in 1995 to take over the licence for the tip, the management of which was handed to 3Cs, a waste disposal company which was to provide technical support. Unfortunately the tip rapidly deteriorated, residents started to complain about the smells and a big increase in local birth defects; and when they picketed it recently RWD was forced to shut it down.

RWD, which earns money by taking waste from Rhondda Cynon Taff, the Vale of Glamorgan and commercial interests too, then threatened to go into liquidation claiming it needed an additional £1.1m from Rhondda Cynon Taff to modify the tip to meet safety standards.

The council agreed to bail RWD out — for the second time in three years. When RWD was first set up it got a handy £1m cash injection from the old Rhondda borough council. As a "cash-rich" company, it was thus not required to pledge any bond as guarantee against future claims. This is why, it says, it now has no money and needs taxpayers' help yet again.

The chief shareholder at RWD is Alan Miles (though he receives no financial benefit from this holding). He was nominated by the council where he is director of environmental services. Though he is supposed to represent the interests of council taxpayers, he has gone along with RWD's begging bowl tactics.

Interestingly RWD also pays two of its directors consultancy fees for technical advice in addition to their salaries. One of them is Hugh Hoather, a director of 3Cs, the management company responsible for the technical side of the mess. Not that he will be worrying unduly: 3Cs, owned by Cheshire county council and the Halton and Warrington borough councils, is being sold to private investors for an estimated £120m. As the saying goes: where's there's muck there's brassed off council taxpayers.

Harlow

ONE reason Harlow council is owed more than £9m in unpaid rent and council tax is because the council's ruling Labour group seems to allow favours to chums who run up debt.

For example, two of the town's Labour party branches were recently allowed to run up rent arrears of £3,000 — a service not usually available to ordinary civilians.

Then there is the strange case of Labour councillor Feroz Kahn. He has debts of around £6,000 from renting a council property he was using as a bakery, which has now closed down. Kahn now runs a hypnosis centre in the town.

When news of his £6,000 bad debt broke, Labour leaders thought they should get tough on debtors. They sent officers to his hypnosis centre to change the locks as punishment for his owing rent on these premises too — in this case just £50. Ironically Harlow couldn't even get this right. Kahn *had* paid the £50 but the council had put the money in the wrong account.

Leeds

NO summer holiday for councillors in Leeds, who are busy filling in one of the most difficult application forms of the municipal year: the one asking which home games they want to watch in the council's luxury box at Leeds United.

The box was meant to be used by visiting dignitaries but these days is allocated to councillors who receive two tickets to every match and all the perks — posh nosh and access to the players' bar. The councillors could always sell the box for £1.4m and spend the money on old people's homes. But this is unlikely.

Talking of old people's homes, longstanding Labour councillor Cherril Cliff has resigned her seat in the city in protest at a decision to close four such social services homes. The reason? The government hasn't given the council enough money to allow it to spend £4.8m to bring the homes up to a decent standard. Far cheaper to close them and return residents to "the community".

Elsewhere the caring, sharing council is now considering charging people with mental health problems, the elderly and disabled between £10 and £22 a week for the use of day centres. And volunteers who give up their time to work with young people were shocked to be told they face new charges for running youth sports groups in council premises. Youth groups previously used the facilities rent free, and many sports clubs in poorer parts of the city were faced with closure as a result of the new charges. The move has been postponed pending a review — after critics pointed out it flew in the face of the council's recent Festival of Sport, which was aimed at attracting youngsters away from their TVs and into sporting activity.

Finally council leader Brian "Sleep" Walker recently ran up a £7,000 bill sending him and an entourage to Durban to sign a very important "memorandum of understanding" between the two cities. Walker took a crystal decanter as a gift only to discover it had shattered during the journey. A box of fragments was gratefully accepted by the amused South Africans.

Hackney

POLICE are to investigate claims that Loraine Monk, vice-chair of the Greater London Labour party, has breached the representation of the people act.

She was elected to Hackney's Clissold ward in May, her nomination form stating that she had been resident in Hackney, a requirement of the act, for the previous 12 months. The address she gave was a three-bedroomed house in Hackney's Aden Grove, which also happens to be the address of well-connected Labour activist Bill Hamilton, his wife Nadine, who is a practising barrister, their child and a live-in nanny.

It must be pretty crowded at the house for Monk and *her* three children as well, all of whom go to school in Kingston, south-west London, where Monk was a councillor for the Tolworth West ward until May. On Kingston council Monk was deputy leader and whip for the Labour group. Confusingly, however, if she really *was* resident in Hackney for the required 12 months, she should not have been a serving councillor in Kingston.

No doubt there is a simple explanation which clears up whether she deceived the returning officer in Hackney or served in Kingston while disqualified, thereby claiming allowances she was not entitled to. Embarrassingly for Labour questions have also been raised about Jim Fitzpatrick, MP and chair of the Greater London party. Did he not know his deputy was in danger of breaching rules governing local councillors? As he told the *Hackney Gazette*: "Allegations of electoral malpractice must be taken seriously".

Ethics Men

ETHICS are not completely dead at rotten borough level to judge by the resolution being put to the Vauxhall constituency Labour party by its Vassall ward branch.

Vauxhall, which boasts Derek Draper and Roger Liddle among its members, has been asked to suspend the men since allegations against them are "bringing the Labour party into disrepute". Really?

Pseuds Corner

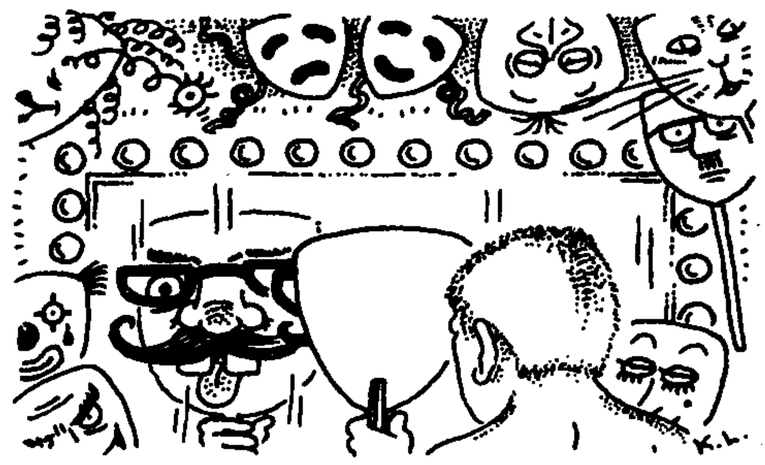
I walk down the street remembering the number of women who try to finger Tom [Jones] in paternity suits, and I think: I'm not surprised. This grandpa is testosterone personified. I just had a conversation with this man, and I've got morning sickness already.

VICTORIA COHEN
Evening Standard

If this technique speaks of a further modality implicit in the work — possibly stochastic, maybe derived from stratigraphy — then the finished results, particularly the brighter blooms (*Blue Pea, Morning Glory, Camellia*) have a sonorousness about them which is confirmed by [Jo] Self's own synaesthesia: 'I liken my own work to the low note of a cello, particularly in the sense that it's an attemporal phenomenon, with no beginning, middle or end.'

WILL SELF
Modern Painters

On Monday I decided to change my name from David Bowker to Daniel Arzo-Boucher. It suits me, n'est pas? The name Bowker is



actually derived from the French word boucher *meaning "butcher", so this wasn't as pretentious as it sounds. I chose Daniel because working with journalists is rather like being in a den full of semi-literate lions. Arzo is just an amusing word that I made up. I think it describes me perfectly.*

DAVID BOWKER
The Times

What is the scene as the sun sets?
Hissing like adders, the flambeaux are extinguished. The urchin leaps up and swings a spotlight. Picked out in its beam, a rivulet of vodka spills from the mouth of the ringmistress, who hangs from a trapeze wire above the ring. It drips from her trembling nipples and courses down her jerking belly. There it mingles with the drool from the infantryman, whose rough tongue flails her blond quim. It spatters onto the handsome acrobat, whom the soldier is at the same time buggering, stinging the bloody welts in the strong musculature of his buttocks. These have been ploughed by the nails of the groaning millionairess, whom the acrobat, in his turn, is riding with writhing thrusts. She lurches up to kiss him as vodka, spittle and blood now combine with the apricot-scented sap of her cunt, and run down into her rosebud arse. There they slicken the ebony velvet of the silent Nubian's pole, as he at last allows himself to climax. The applause rings round the tent, and the clowns tumble in glee. But this hectic gush is not the final ingredient. What makes the elixir more subtle than Yquem is the astringent salt of my tears.

KIT HESKETH-HARVEY
"The Island of Seduction"
Erotic Review

CONTRIBUTORS: Bill Homewood, Michael Carlson, Gnome, Alison Higson.

£10 paid for entries

Fishy Tales

FISHERIES minister Elliot Morley has been left badly adrift on a sea of humbug after another blatant example of the gap between government rhetoric on the environment and reality arrives at the Eye.

Morley was invited to attend a Greenpeace press "event" at which the pressure group was to urge EU member states to ban drift netting on the high seas. At the June fisheries council meeting members duly did so, with effect from 1 January 2002.

Morley wrote a friendly reply to Greenpeace, saying he regretted being unable to attend the event due to "other commitments". He added: "The UK is, of course, strongly in support of a ban... if you decide to go ahead with a press event... I will be very happy to send a message of support."

Morley's letter was drafted by a MAFF civil servant, J.E. Robbs, whose accompanying memo to Morley's aides perhaps reflects the real views of the Sir Humphreys on the subject rather more accurately. "Greenpeace," it says, "have acquired an international reputation for irresponsible campaigning on marine issues. Any identification of UK ministers with them... could be damaging [and] unfortunate... The parliamentary secretary may wish nonetheless to respond to Greenpeace in positive terms along the lines of the attached brief..."

Back on the Scottish mainland, meanwhile, the hunt for the source of the outbreak of the salmon-killing disease infectious salmon anaemia (ISA) is hotting up.

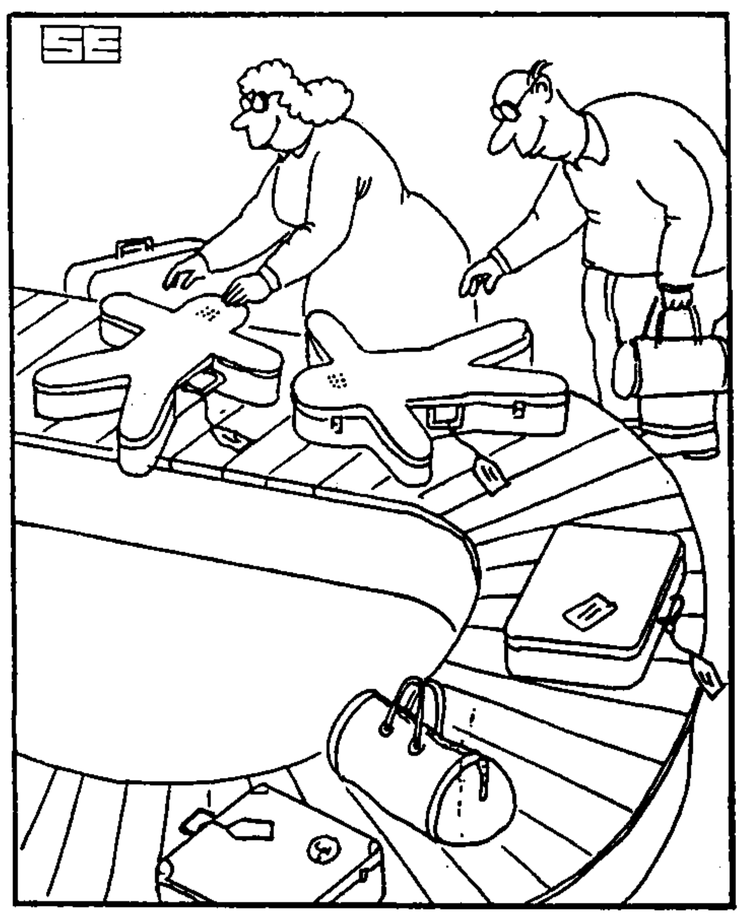
ISA has already caused 107 out of 332 Scottish fish farms to be placed in quarantine. There's no known cure for the disease and millions of factory-farmed salmon may have to be slaughtered.

Still, the Scottish office (SO) refuses to disclose the hatchery which supplied the infected young salmon in the first place, claiming the matter is covered by "commercial confidentiality". The Norwegian-owned company Hydro Seafoods GSP, in whose marine cages the disease was first identified, also refuses to reveal the source of the outbreak.

This secrecy means speculation is now rife. Is the source for the disease the Hydro Seafoods GSP hatchery site at Eskadale to the north of Inverness — cleared, disinfected and closed down just two weeks prior to the SO announcement that ISA had arrived in Scotland? Or are infected Norwegian well-boats, used to transport smolts and eggs, the source of the infection? And why is this a matter of commercial confidentiality when the SO fishery scientists and the Scottish Salmon Growers Association insist that ISA is not a risk to human health?

The public of course is still being invited to buy farmed salmon — the advertising emphasising the clear, unpolluted Scottish waters the fish are reared in.

'Old Trout'



The Hendersons saved a small fortune in children's air fares

Letters

Private Eye

The long Dubai

Sir,

I live in Dubai and have not received an issue of your illustrious organ since the article about George Atkinson.

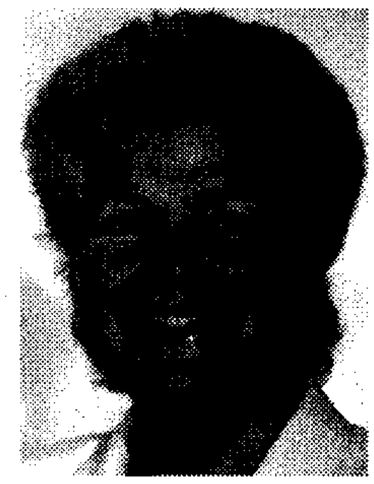
Could there be a connection?

Sincerely,
JACK TOWNSEND,

Dubai.

Lookalike

Butcher



Spanker

Sir,

I couldn't help noticing the striking resemblance of Gloria Stewart, erstwhile friend of Paul Johnson, to Pat Butcher of EastEnders. Are they perhaps sisters? I think we should be told.

Yours,
SUE ROCCELLI

London W14

Sir,

Re: Letters, 10 July. The BBC TV test card girl is not related to Louise Woodward. There is, however, a connection. The BBC TV test card girl grew up to become Meatloaf. Louise Woodward used Meatloaf as a "stand-in" during the court case whenever the hearing clashed with the timing of her elocution lessons.

Yours,
BILL JEFFREY,

Letchworth.

Justice for all

Sir,

In your recent Hypewatch you left out one most important instance of "private sector values taking over public life" — as you put it.

The crown prosecution service (CPS) is no exception. All the stationery of that useful and efficient institution now informs those with whom it communicates, including those whom it prosecutes and their lawyers, that the CPS is guilty of "Working in the interests of justice". In Wales they also tell us the same thing in Welsh. All this gladdens our hearts.

Yours faithfully,
ROBYN LEWIS,

Gwynedd, Wales.

Seeing red

Sir,

Re: Paul's e-mail regarding the colour of Sgt Sharpe's jacket in SHARPE'S TRIUMPH. *As, at this point in the history of Sharpe (1803), Richard is a sergeant in the 33rd, he DOES wear a red-jacket. The earliest we have seen him in the green of the rifles is in* SHARPE'S RIFLES *(1809).*

Yours in an anorak,
ANDY GIBBONS,

Via e-mail.

Paramount picture

Sir,

I would like to point out some factual errors in the recent David Lowry article.

DWF was quoted on the NASD's Electronic Bulletin Board until its New York market maker, Grady & Hatch, went bankrupt due to US solvency laws not Paramount. GCD was quoted on the Internet and was applying to a London exchange, but its sponsoring brokers, withdrew due to the problems in Portugal. Paramount did not own GCD, it was a nominee shareholder, a common stockbroker practice.

Mr Funt and Ms Van der Zwaan were hired by the beneficial owners of Paramount. Funt's company — Elite Funding Group — was hired to run the telesales side of the business. Neither has a criminal record. David has knowledge of only Kirkfield Administrators which was an off-shore holding company sold by David which he then maintained as resident agent in the Isle of Man (David's records show that neither Funt nor Zwaan owned Kirkfield). Resident Agents are not responsible for nor would they know of its overseas activities. No illegal activity in the company was ever reported to David. We have no knowledge of the other companies.

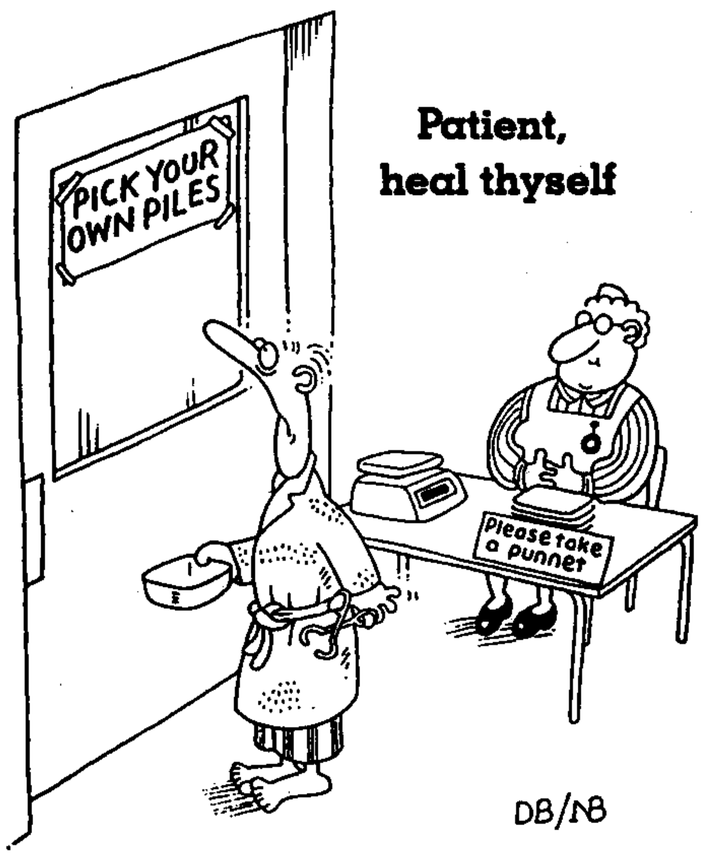
I have quite outstanding references for Craig Heesch and Don Rogers. If they were really not FBI Agents they would have been arrested in the USA where impersonating a Federal Officer is a **serious** *jailable offence.*

Does PRIVATE EYE *support this injustice?*

Yours disappointedly,
DYLAN LOWRY,

Via fax.

NEW OLD SAYINGS



Patient, heal thyself

Oxford Man

Sir,

Paul Dryden (EYE 955) *says that the proper purpose of the old LNWR station at Oxford is to receive and despatch trains and their passengers. Indeed it is. The station should be reopened* **in situ** *as the terminus of a suburban railway service to Wolvercote and beyond. Then we shall be spared the grim spectacle of a university purportedly dedicated to the life of the mind building a business school out of arms profits. We shall also be spared the folly of six lanes interposed between the pinch-points near Worcester College and in the Botley Road.*

If the place is now a mess, that is because the station should never have been closed. But in those days defenders of the railways were dismissed by economic advisers to the ministry of transport as "nostalgic".

I, too, declare an interest: I am a shareholder in Railtrack and a former Fellow of an Oxford College.

Yours sincerely,
G.L. HUXLEY,

University of Dublin.

LUVVIES

"What I do on stage is the most strenuous, exhausting and demanding thing you can do. It is emotionally draining. I put everything I had into it. I stayed up here, lonely, living in a hotel room. You don't spare yourself."

STEVEN BERKOFF
Liverpool Daily Post

CONTRIBUTOR: Alyn Hyne.

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

Wingsail and a prayer

Sir,

Re: EYE *955, Curse of Gnome. As you exult in your part in the denigration of John Walker and the liquidation of Walker Wingsail Systems Ltd, you may wish to ponder on the resulting disappointments, unhappiness and perhaps misery arising from the liquidation.*

There is the loss of jobs of the dedicated skilled workforce and loss of business of various suppliers of goods and services — particularly important in the present uncertain conditions and the disappointment of about 6,500 investors who have invested about £14m over the past 11 years in the laudable, one might even say unique desire, given the British dread of backing its inventors, to be involved in the designing, building and marketing of a British revolutionary wingsail boat.

It is quite clear that the investors in WWS Ltd, of which I am one, are not the "quick buck" type but good patriotic people who wish to see a British success.

You may sneer at the description "revolutionary", but revolutionary it is and a great pleasure to sail. One wonders as to the worthwhile creativity and contributions of the sneerers and critics.

The viability of Wingsail having been established, it may be that the liquidated assets of Walker Wingsail Systems will be acquired by some foreign company: Japanese readily springs to mind — another one in the eye of John Walker, further rejoicing at PRIVATE EYE.

Yours faithfully,
A.F. BROUGHTON,

Reading.

Lambeth balk

Sir,

Re: Lambeth Bridge House. As vice-chair of Lambeth council's planning sub-committee, I am writing to set the record straight about Lambeth Bridge House where Labour councillors are concerned (Nooks & Corners, 24 July).

You ask why this scheme has been allowed to proceed: "Is it because New Labour politicians just like anything new?" In fact, the decision on this application was taken in April — before the borough election when Labour won back control of the council, so at that time five-eights of the committee were Liberals and Tories, who all voted for the scheme. Of the three Labour members, two of us — Cllr Kevin Craig, now the committee chair, and I — voted against the scheme, the only members to do so.

Since then, we have done everything we can to salvage this sorry situation. The 1940 building may be "of no particular distinction" but its monumental style was at least appropriate to its key landmark site at the foot of Lambeth Bridge, next to the Palace. I am horrified by the prospect of its replacement by an unattractive glass block of luxury flats which will be sold at £400,000 upwards each — a development which will benefit investors but offers nothing to local people, and certainly not the affordable housing that the area needs and environmental improvements it deserves.

Regretfully, we found that there was nothing we could do, however much we disliked the scheme.

Yours sincerely,
CLLR RUTH LING,

Vice-chair, Planning Applications sub-committee, Lambeth Council.

Camden counsel

Sir,

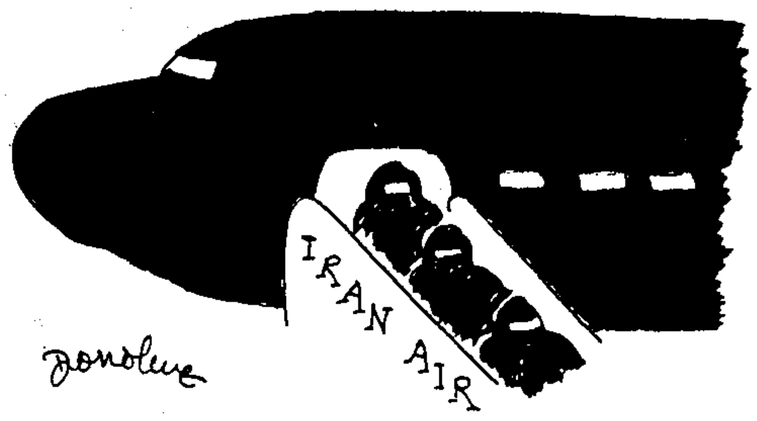
*Your report in Rotten Boroughs (*EYE *953) of the industrial case brought against me by Amanda Kelly is wide of the mark.*

Her evidence, given on oath, is that she did **not** *complain of a sexual assault by a former council officer, and has in fact never mentioned this alleged incident to me — which is not surprising as it occurred two years before I became Camden's chief executive and on an occasion at which I was not present.*

Yours sincerely,
STEVE BUNDRED,

London Borough of Camden.

● *Fair enough. However, Amanda Kelly did bring an industrial tribunal case against Camden council in which she accused Steve Bundred of sex discrimination. This was recently settled out of court in an agreement which will cost the council £80,000.*



Feed for thought

Sir,

*As an administrator in the agricultural secretariat of the EU Commission, I am writing to correct some of the statements made by Mr Edward Spalton in his recent letters (*EYE *955, 953 and previous), regarding the use of meat and bonemeal in animal feeds and the incidence of BSE in mainland Europe.*

Firstly with regard to the reporting of BSE cases in Europe: I myself have been involved directly in monitoring BSE cases across the EU, since the beginning of the epidemic which has by and large been confined to the UK. The survey methods used to collect the data are scientifically and statistically validated, and involve extensive farm visits across the EU, in no way are the figures "massaged" or as Edward Spalton suggests, "under reported".

It is apparent that Mr Spalton is attempting to defend his industry's interests by blaming EU officialdom and arguing that "good quality bonemeal was regarded as a wholesome feed ingredient, which has been used for 60 years". I can find no information to support this view and as for his view that "the ban is denying farmers of an economically priced protein", it is pure canard. The ban is actually protecting farmers and consumers from the effects of contaminated feed but it is also denying a cheap raw material to unscrupulous multinational feed compounders from which they extract lucrative profits!

Yours faithfully,
DR EAMONN O'DWYER,

Dublin.

"I'm on the bus!"

Diana balls

"The chasm between kitsch and high culture is just a hairline fracture for Vancouver artist Catherine Jones. She's painted her share of dead celebrities, including Marilyn Monroe and Malcolm X, but Diana is the first she's sculpted into a candle... 'People who love Diana love this object because it's so beautiful,' says Jones. 'People who don't like her like it because there's that "Let's light it, let's burn Diana" aspect.' The candle takes 54 minutes to melt from the top of the head to the chin. Rather than turning into a headless grotesque, the wax pours down through the cleavage to create an Art Nouveau-style flower. Jones discovered, quite by chance, that as the candle burns down, its cross-section reveals a heart."

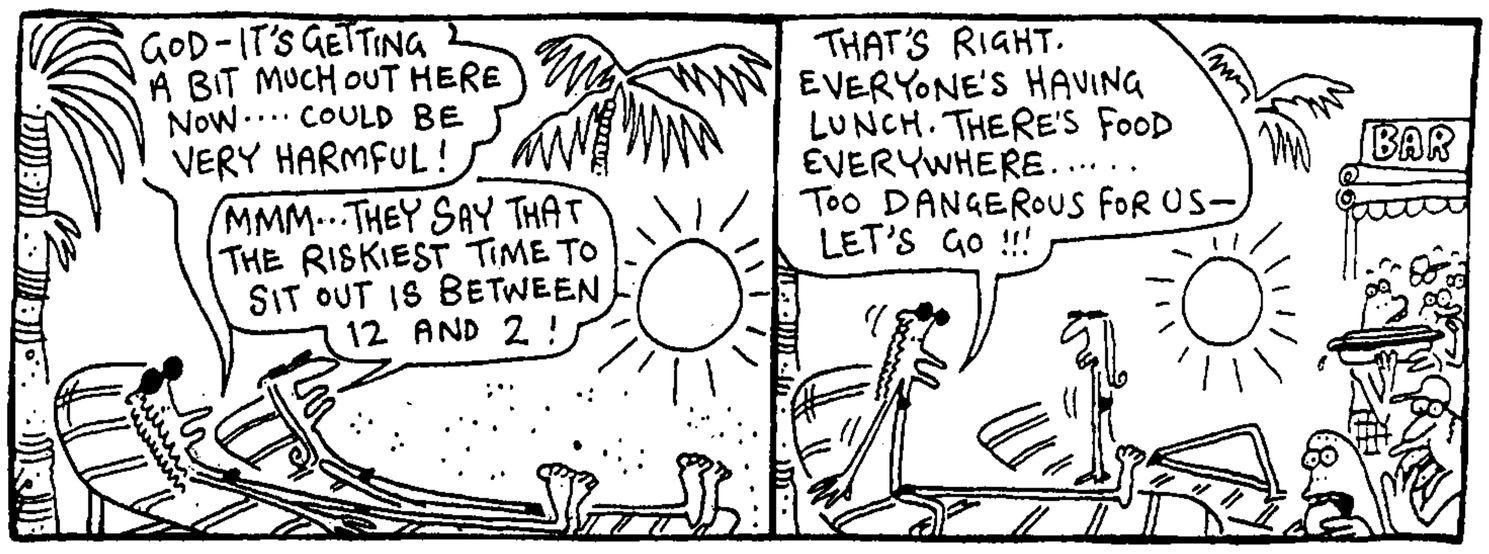
— From Conrad Black's magazine *Saturday Night* (submitted by Tony Catterall).

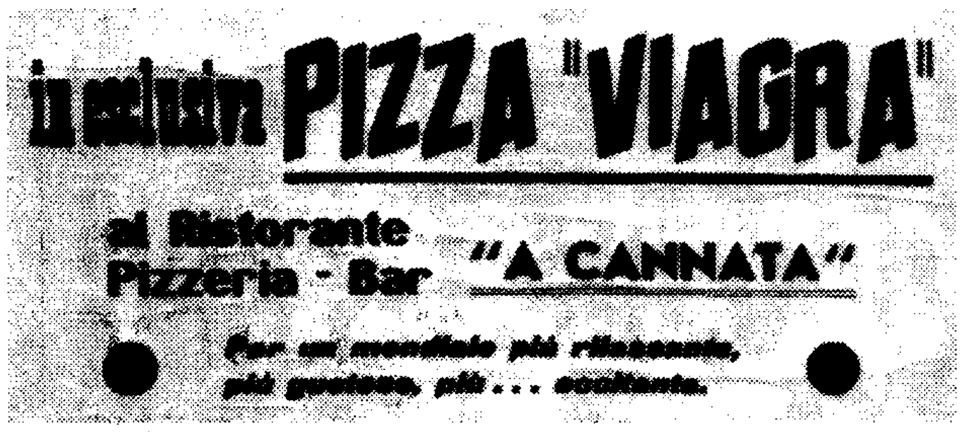
"The concert will be of melodious new ballads composed by Nesta Wyn Ellis... The lovely music — 'Healing Love Sound' — is to concentrate healing energies and to focus them through the music to the work of healing the nation and aiding spiritual work here: to unify those elements which have been in conflict in the aftermath of the life and death of Diana, Princess of Wales; to clear up grief and anger over Diana's death, nullify criticism of the Princess's life which is holding back the positive energy needed for the good work to be done in her name; to enable the spiritual meaning of the death to be understood... Songs include A Love So Beautiful, A Love So Fine, La Pluie D'Amour."

— Advert for concert at St James's church, Piccadilly, by John Major's biographer Nesta Wyn Ellis.

SUPERMODELS

KERBER





I-SPY

Lipari, S. Italy

Submitted by Frank Auton. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Knackered argument

Sir,

Re: "Guardian Angels", EYE *955. As a serving officer I am no great fan of the [Police] Federation or RJW, and cannot comment on the merits of the case referred to, but from Footie's article it appears that:*

1. "Smaller newspapers" (the GUARDIAN*? the* EYE*?) should be allowed to print what they like about police officers, with impunity. This is the kind of hypocrisy your organ routinely decries.*

*2. Defamed police officers should not be allowed to take advantage of their federation subscriptions in seeking redress. Presumably they must rely on campaigning journalists like Footie to take up cudgels on their behalf (*EYES *passim) should he choose to. Fortunately the federation apply a slightly more objective test, as indicated by the victories he disparages.*

3. Federation (ie, union) funds should be spent instead on providing extra police on the beat. In which case it must follow that the Fire Brigades Union should spend their subs on extra Fire Engines!

This kind of nonsense not only smacks of Phil Space journalism, but damages your organ's credibility.

Yours sincerely,
C. CAMFIELD,

London W1.

Paul's letter

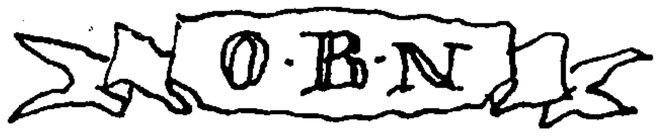
Sir,

*Never did I suspect, perhaps naively, that becoming a parent governor at Pimlico School (*EYE *955, School Report) would result in an appearance in your celebrated organ. Neither did I ever anticipate that another privilege would be an invitation to the home office. But both as a parent and a governor I know the importance of accurate school reports for our children. So it is that I noticed the inaccuracies of your informant. In fact the last time I visited the home office was some years ago when I was trying to locate my lost passport application.*

When I was elected to the governing body in December 1997 I made it clear that I had an open mind on the future of PFI. The conclusion I came to was based on a careful assessment of all the options presented by all the interested groups. I was guided by what I thought, after lengthy discussions with governor colleagues, was best for the school. Truly a complicated and difficult decision but not one requiring a visit to the home office.

Yours sincerely,
NICHOLAS PAUL,

London WC1.



"Lord Snowdon has the one quality that never dims with time. He has far more than his fair quota of bewitching charm. Also he knows it and how to use it. He makes you feel that in a world of glittering, exciting people, you're the most dazzling of them all."

LYNDA LEE POTTER
The Daily Mail

Turnip for the books

Sir,

Regarding one of the items in Colemanballs (955): "In football, Simon, time and space are the same thing."

Far from being the subject of ridicule for this remark, Graham Taylor should in fact be praised for his wide knowledge. He has obviously been reading A BRIEF HISTORY OF TIME *by Professor Stephen Hawking and is therefore well aware that, in football as in the rest of the universe, time and space are indeed now understood to be the same thing.*

Yours sincerely,
NICK SPILLER,

Via e-mail.

Car crime warning

WARNING posters will soon be seen around the area in a bid to clamp down on car crime by Macclesfield Police.

Reporter Group

Broken homes

Sir,

Are you on a moral crusade? If not, it seems a whole generation of homewreckers are to be victimised for your readers' salacious pleasure.

Victoria Coren, E. Murdoch, fair enough; but the charming, persistently pisspoor primetime "has been" A. Turner deserves a break.

Shame on you!

Yours in expectation of more of the same,
SAM FAVELL,

Leicester.

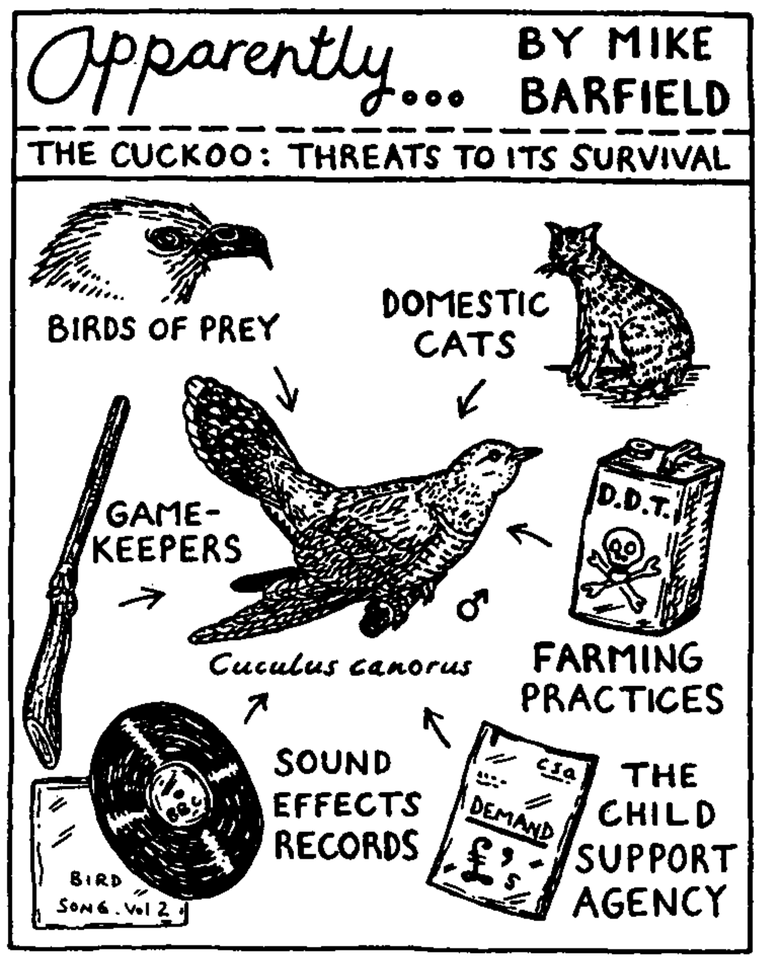
Talking back

Sir,

I was very touched to read in last week's EYE *that I have a pretty face. How sweet. You're very handsome too, Ian.*

Yours faithfully,
HARRY THOMPSON,

Talkback Productions Ltd.



Total balls

Sir,

*The occasional swipe at the English supporters' tendency towards yobbish xenophobia is justified and amusing, but Harry Enfield's bores simply went too far (*EYE *955). If you knew the slightest bit about football of course it would certainly help, but instead of simply admitting your ignorance of the greatest game in the world you or Harry Enfield chooses to simply take any emotional feeling about the game as being ignorant, xenophobic and rather over the top. Michael Heath's drawing of thugs adjoining the piece epitomises your ignorance on the subject, perhaps a more suitable drawing would have been one of the* PRIVATE EYE *offices full of stuffy public school tosspots unable to appreciate the greatest game in the world.*

From,
ALEX KING,

Plymouth, Devon.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

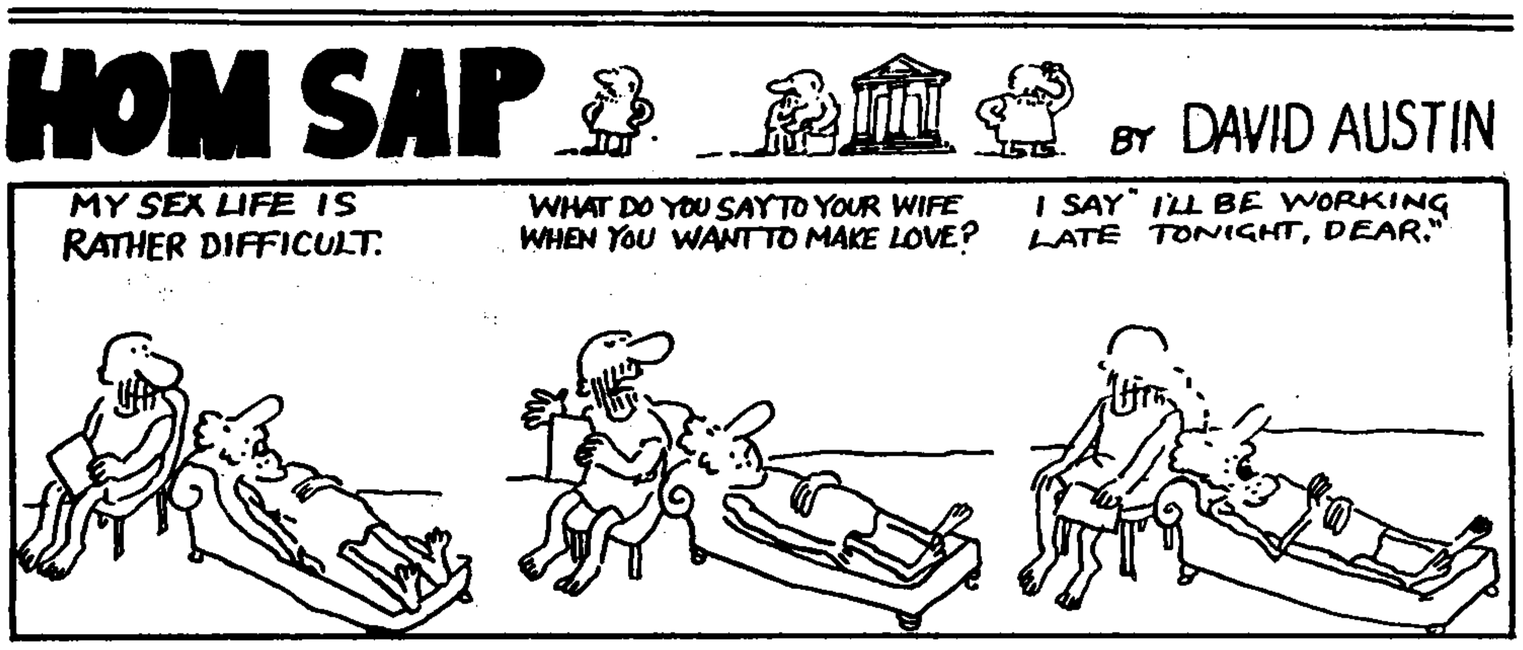
"In cycling, you can put all your money on one horse."
STEPHEN ROCHE, Eurosport
(Michael Naylor)

"If you'd offered me a 69 at the start this morning I'd have been all over you."
SAM TORRANCE, BBC2
(Roger Guthrie)

"It's amazing how, in this part of the world, history has been part of its past."
DAVID DUFFY, Eurosport
(Celia Darbyshire)

"And that was played by the Lindsay String Quartet... or at least two thirds of them."
SEAN RAFFERTY, Radio 3
(J. Rattenbury)

"The swimmers are swimming out of their socks."
SHARRON DAVIES, BBC
(Terry Wright)



FUNNY OLD WORLD

"I still can't believe what Jason did, it's very distressing," Paul Miller told reporters outside his home in Newcastle, New South Wales. "I was deeply hurt by what happened, and even now people are still coming up to me in the street and bursting into tears when they find out I'm not really dead."

Paul Miller was speaking days after his twenty-six-year-old son Jason had announced his father's death in the local newspaper, The Newcastle Herald. "The first I knew about it was when a friend ran up to me in the street and started hugging me. He was crying, and eventually he told me that he'd thought I was dead, because he'd just read my death notice in the Herald. At first I didn't believe him, so I bought a copy, and sure enough, there under the Death Notices was this ad: 'MILLER, Paul Leslie — 4.6.44 to 9.5.98. Will be a much missed father, grandfather and friend. Will remain in our hearts forever.'

"I contacted the paper, and they told me that my son Jason had placed the notice. When I confronted him, he denied it at first, but then he confessed that he'd done it so he could get time off work to go whelk fishing. The ad cost him $16.80, but he showed it to his boss and was given seven days paid bereavement leave. He still seems to think it was worth it, and he says he doesn't know why I'm making such a fuss. He's a callous bastard. We'd been having a few problems over a house he was renting off me, because of the strong smell of whelks, but I never thought it would come to this." *(The Brisbane Courier-Mail, 23/6/98. Spotter: Norm Reynolds)*

—o—

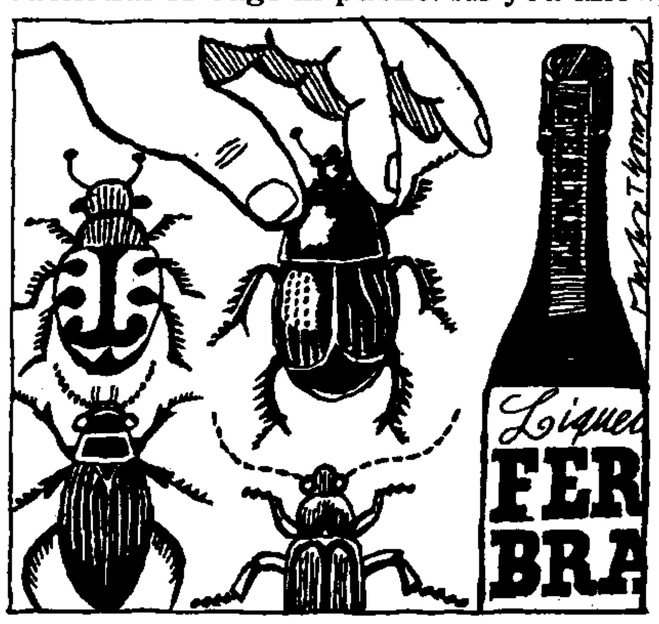
"I thought he was just being silly or having a joke," Anne Normand told Coroner John Pollard at Tameside Magistrates Court. "He'd often threatened to kill himself in the past, so when he strung himself up from the door handle, we didn't really pay any attention to him."

Earlier, Anne Normand had told the inquest into the death of her partner, German businessman Dietrich Johann Heinrich Kaletsch, what had occurred that evening in their Stalybridge home. "He'd talked about killing himself ever since his tyre and exhaust business went bust, but we never thought he'd do it. All I remember is him bringing me a hot drink in the bedroom, then taking off his belt, putting it round his neck, and stringing himself up from the door handle. I said nothing. But after a few minutes, I called my daughter in and told her to cut him down with a pair of scissors. Then we rolled him over onto the carpet, and listened. We both thought he was alright, because he seemed to be snoring, so we left him there and had the curried eggs for dinner. Next morning he was stiff as a board." (The Reporter [Tameside], May 98. Spotter: R Beaton)

—o—

"Unlike my opponents, I'm one politician who keeps his electoral promises," Eduard Kremlicka told Czech reporters as he bit the head off a large beetle.

"As chairman of the Pensioners Party, I promised that we would pass the five percent threshold in the general election, and gain seats in Parliament. And I vowed that, if we didn't, then I would take personal responsibility for our failure by eating a bucketful of bugs in public. As you know,



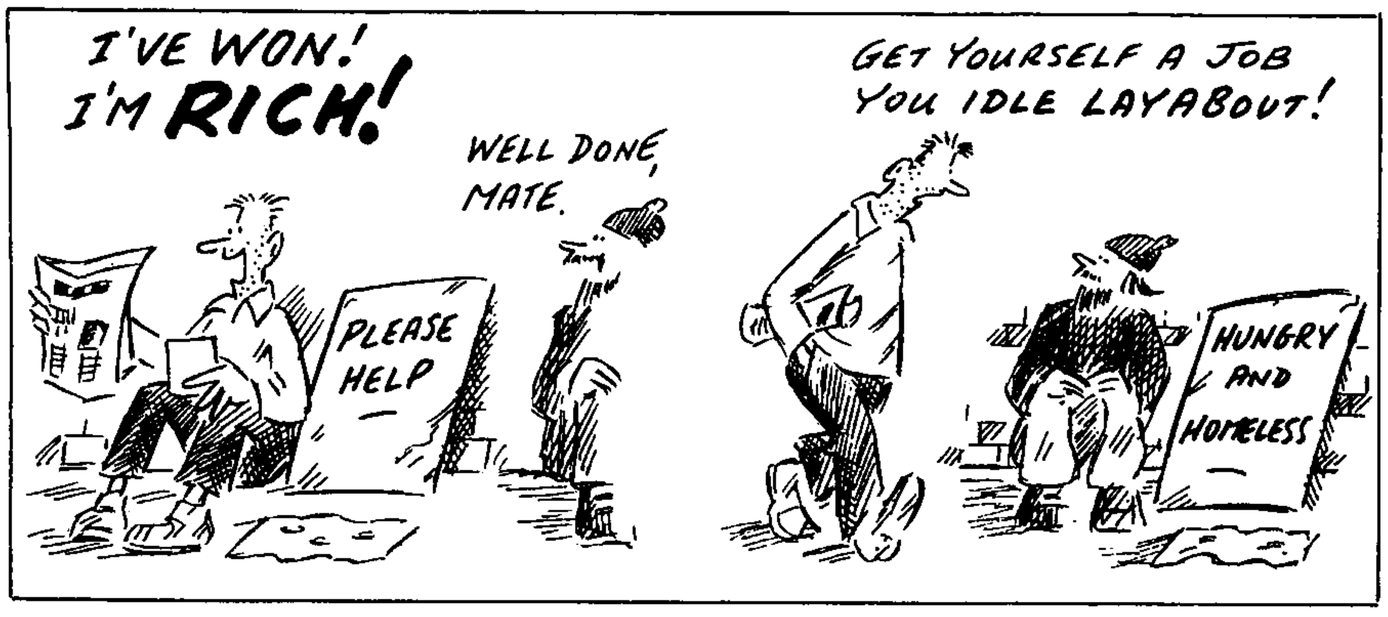
we only got three percent, so now you can watch as I fulfil my electoral pledge."

Asked about the taste of the beetles he was eating, the seventy-six-year-old white-mustachioed former Communist army officer swallowed thoughtfully before replying: "They're not so bad. I find the best way to eat them is to bite the head off. Then, when the yellow jelly comes out, I gobble it up and wash it down with Fernet liqueur. The large crunchy ones are best. The little ones don't seem to taste of anything." *(CTK News Agency [Prague], 28/6/98. Spotter: Darren Ingram)*

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

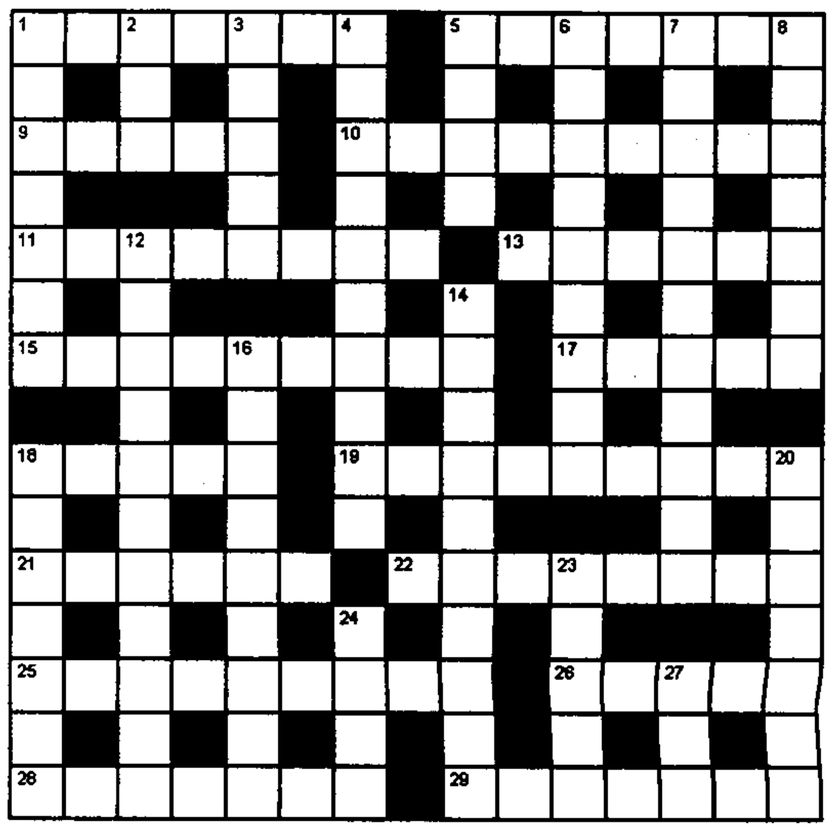
The Lottery Winners

TURNER



EYE CROSSWORD 111

by Cyclops — *£100 prize*



ACROSS

1 Relief provision – employment especially suitable for big mouths? (4,3)
5 Store Al-Fayed's opening in dress Tuesday (7)
9 Ejaculation which when repeated subdues the excited member? (5)
10 Group of stars needs really good hugger (5,4)
11/13 Having inflamed Brenda, Ray possibly has to have another look at our volume assessment (8,6)
13 (see 11)
15 Reciprocal action of Bristol garrison at one time (3,3,3)
17 Go down sportingly on member – but don't overdo it (5)
18 French master needs a short time on the web (5)
19 Act pisses off wishful-thinkers (9)
21 (see 2)
22 Harsh Brenda's exposed (8)
25 Out-of-control sexual athlete trying to contact somebody (9)
26 Frenchman who scored one in second leg (5)
28 In suspense having been given the old Irish PM treatment? (7)
29 The French: into knocking off – Blair distances himself from that (3,4)

DOWN

1 Look out when in punt for *Quotations of Chairman Mao* maybe (7)
2/21/27 The habit of educated clannish conservative traditionalists? (3,6,3)
3 To jack off our right – judgemental person (5)
4 Dictator: it's great getting Resistance in trouble (3,7)
5 A bit of an arsehole during the elections (4)
6 Brown-noses goats having an erection (7,2)
7 It's regularly out on the streets, like its distributors? (3,3,5)
8 Be sick but not downcast (5,2)
12 Dear me, Hank sadly has the last word on mummy (11)
14 To stay in close contact, Rod gets pissed (5,5)
16 Has top toe mangled by this practitioner? (9)
18 Interest in Mrs T's restoration – vice president gets wind! (7)
20 Have a notion endless pussy, etc. is out (7)
23 Boycott got erect holding one... (5)
24 ... – even indulged in bondage? (4)
27 (see 2)

£100 prize to first solution opened on 14.8.98. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 110

Winner: J. LIMB

ACROSS: 1 Newspaper 6 Assam 9/12/7 Crown Prosecution Service 10 Scoundrel 11 Nag 12 (see 9) 13 Midriff 15 Shekels 17 Delilah 20 Compute 22 (see 21) 24 Act 25 Zeitgeist 26 Bidet 27 Dryad 28 Hardliner.

DOWN: 1 Nicknamed 2 Wronged 3 Pin-up 4 Piss off 5 Rioters 6 Ad nauseam 7 (see 9) 8 Milan 14 Ill-judged 16 Spectator 18 Lustily 19 Hashish 20 Crofter 21/22ac Ugandan discussions 22 Dazed 23 Sibyl.

ST ALBION PARISH NEWS 1

Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Hullo!

Or should I say "Buon Giorno"? — because, as you know, by the time you read this Cherie and I will be in Italy, enjoying I hope rather better weather than the rest of you at home!

Holidays, I always think, are a good time to slow down and get our daily life into perspective.

That's why, before leaving, I announced all the changes I have made to the PCC, so that all those involved will have the whole summer to come to terms either with their new jobs, or with the fact that they no longer have one!

Let's be honest, nobody likes to be told that they're no longer needed! And, believe me, I took no pleasure at all in having to say goodbye to Harriet and Gavin and David and all those others who have done such a tremendous job over the past year behind the scenes in making St Albion's such a great success!

But there comes a time when things have to change. "To every thing there is a season, turn, turn" (New Seekers, 7.5).

And wasn't it Our Lord himself who had to say to one of his own group ministry who didn't quite make the grade, "Many are called, but few are chosen for the top jobs" (Peter 1.1).

That's something for one or two people to think about when they're on the beach thinking that they may be washed up! But of course there is a happier side to our parish re-organisation.

There are all those talented individuals with a real vocation, who at last I have been able to call upon to play

"We're all going on a summer holiday!" *(Book of Cliff, 7.13)*

their full part in helping to build my vision of what St Albion's could be.

Mr Mandelson, our churchwarden, has taken on even more responsibilities. But don't worry! You'll be pleased to know that he is still very much in charge of our Millennium Tent Project, which he will take full credit for when it is a success (and of course full blame in the very unlikely event that it is a disaster!).

Then I am delighted to be able to give a very important new job to Mr Cunningham, who becomes our Head Verger as a reward for his great success in running the Parish Organic Bar B Q Nites with those wonderful Non-Beef Burgers, T-Bone Free Tofu Steaks and the Quorn Pork-style Sausages which we shall never forget!

Mr Cunningham's new role is to keep an eye on what everyone else is doing and report back to me personally. So, PCC members beware! He's not known as "Jack Boots" for nothing!

And just as some have moved down, and some have moved up, for others there has been the "Third Way" of moving sideways, like Mrs Beckett, who is now in charge of the Church Cleaning, whereas before she was in charge of the Flower Roster!

And there is even a Fourth Way, the "Way Out Of Line", which brings me to the sad subject of Mr Field. Frank and I have been friends for a long time, until yesterday, so you can imagine how disappointed I was that he refused to go quietly when I relieved him of his duties in charge of the poor box.

But, really, there was no call for him to get up at a parish meeting and criticise me and Mr Brown for not allowing him to get on with his job.

It's fair enough to criticise Mr Brown — that's healthy and constructive. But, surely, the Vicar must be above this kind of petty back-biting criticism from someone who was jolly lucky that I gave him a job in the first place!

And, by the way, the suggestion that I walked out of the parish hall when he was reading out his list of complaints is entirely untrue. I had to leave for an important meeting with young William Hague in the Sixth Form Common Room, only he couldn't make the meeting because he was listening to Mr Field (and, I am told, sniggering in a distinctly unhelpful manner!).

The fact is that Frank never really fitted in with the new St Albion's, even though I have enormous respect for him!

And while I am on the subject of unpleasant rumour-mongering and tittle-tattle, may I take this opportunity to correct the gossip being peddled by certain people around the Britannia Arms (Mr Lawson will know who I mean!), to the effect that Cherie and I are staying in a grand palace on a "freebie"!

For the record, the Palazzo Stravaganzi is a modest converted farmhouse of only 37 rooms with a humble Olympic swimming pool and only two tennis courts.

Nor is it the case that the owner, Prince Stravaganzi, was asked to move out while Cherie and I stay here. It was simply that there was not room for two families with kids in one palace, so he has very graciously agreed to my suggestion that he should stay in the local pensione while we are here!

Ciao!

Tony

PS. A final word on our parish "regeneration" (Don't you hate the word "reshuffle"?). A number of parishioners obviously expected that Mr Cook, Mr Smith, Mr Lairg and Mr Robinson might be leaving the PCC due to their various difficulties in the past year. The fact that they have **all** kept their jobs should make it clear what I think of those members of the parish who indulge in unconstructive criticism of my friends!

ST ALBION PARISH NEWS 2

TO REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS...

■ Frank Field, who has lost his job and will never work again.
■ Also, Mrs Harman who is in a similar position, although the bunch of flowers I gave her will do a lot to lessen the pain that she must be feeling!
■ Also, our Treasurer Mr Brown who must not take too much to heart all the unjust criticism that is being spread around by people claiming to be my friends! As it says in the Good Book, "Let he that cannot abide the heat depart from the kitchen" (Song of Aga, 4.12).

TB

Verses By A Local Poet

Though summer has
turned out cold
And the skies are
filled with grey,
When Tony smiles
it's like the sun
And he blows the clouds
away.

M. Bragg, 94,
St. Albion's Sunset Home

A NOTICE FROM MR MANDELSON, THE CHURCHWARDEN

On behalf of everyone who came to the Summer Party in the Rose Garden at the Vicarage, may I thank Tony for his wonderful hospitality and inspiring address. And let us not forget Cherie and the good ladies she employed to provide the refreshments — which were not nearly as lavish as those who weren't invited seem to think.
What a wonderful send-off this provided for the holidays and may I suggest a perfect read for the beach — *Coming Up Roses* by The Rev A.R.P. Blair (M.A. Oxon), which is available from the vestry at the very reasonable price of £5.99.
May I add a personal note and wish you all a very happy holiday except for one of you. Mr Field will know who I mean.

OLDIES BUT GOLDIES!

Our picture shows our former incumbent Rev. Jim Callaghan with his wife Audrey on the occasion of their recent 60th Wedding Anniversary. And there is more cause for celebration in the Callaghan household, because their daughter Margaret (Mrs Jay) has been chosen by the Vicar to run the St Albion's Sunset Home For Retired Gentlefolk, replacing Mr Richard who, sadly, did not come up to scratch and was not related to anyone important!

Tinker Tailor Soldier Shayler

by John Le Carré On Spying

SHAYLER sat in the Bar Georges Blake in the Rue d L'Espion and ordered his usual.

"A pint of Boddington's," he said in perfect English, "shaken, not stirred."

Shayler looked at himself in the smoky mirror of the bar. No one would recognise him with his stick-on beard purchased from the famous Paris joke shop "Barbes Sont Nous".

"Excusez-moi, Monsieur Shayler," intervened the waiter. "There are some gentlemen who have come to see you from, how-you-say it, ze MI5?"

Shayler's face fell as did his beard into his foaming Boddington's.

"Hello, Shayler," sniggered Master Mole Catcher George Shmiley, "it's been a long time."

Shayler looked desperately for an escape — but there was no way out.

"Let me go, George, or I'll blow the gaff. I'll tell them everything. All the jobs you bungled, all the bombs you could have stopped, all the terrorists you let through your fingers. It won't look good, Shmiley."

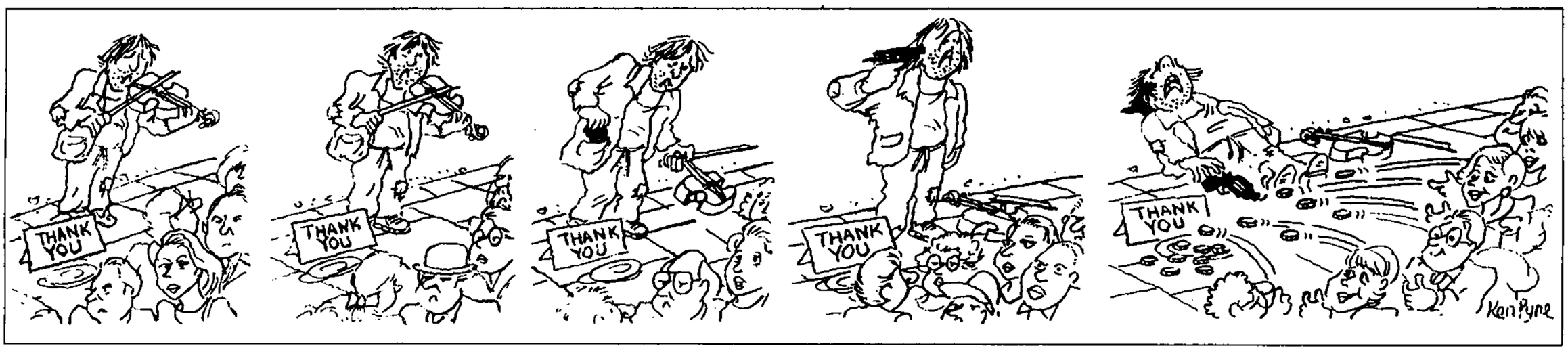
"Too late, Shayler," Shmiley shmiled. "Everyone knows we're useless. It's even been in the Sunday Telegraph."

Shayler picked up his laptop. It really was all over.

"All right, Shmiley. I'll come quietly."

©J. Le Carre 1998

TOMORROW: Chapter 2, The Gadaffi Conundrum.



VARIETY

THE INTERNATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

WHICH TOONTOWN CHICK FOR DISNEY DI FLICK?

LOS ANGELES Stars of the cartoon motion picture industry were queuing up today for a chance to play Diana, Princess of Wales in the forthcoming Disney adaptation of her life story.

Top of the "A" list to land the plum role is Pocahontas, hot after her starring role in the native American spectacular *Pocahontas*. But also hotly tipped by showbiz insiders is Belle from *Beauty and the Beast* who has already played the part of a beautiful girl married to a monster in her last major hit.

Outsiders include Ariel from *The Little Mermaid* and long-shot "Anastasia", if the Russian beauty can be released from her Fox studio contract.

However, Disney have apparently ruled out Cinderella ("Too old"), Snow White ("Weight problem") and Betty Boop ("Still in black and white").

Other key roles have already been sewn up and whoever is to play Diana will have to fit in with a strong existing supporting cast.

That Cast In Full

Camilla Parker Bowles	Cruella De Vil
Prince Charles	Dumbo
The Duke of Edinburgh	Grumpy
Her Majesty The Queen	Ursula, the Sea Witch
Dodi Fayed	Aladdin
Mohamed Fayed	Jafar
Michael Cole	Pinocchio
Major James Hewitt	Hercules
Martin Bashir	Mowgli
Sir Robert Fellowes	Shere Khan
The White Fiat Uno	Herbie, The Love Bug

(That's enough cast. Ed.)

'CHANGING ROOMS' SHOCK

by Our TV Staff
Carole Silley

A MEMBER of the public broke down in tears yesterday when she discovered that a room she owns had been given "a tacky makeover" by a design team headed by Lord Irvine of Lairg.

The room, situated in a pleasant neo-Gothic building overlooking the Thames, belongs to the general public but was transformed by the Lord Chancellor into a hideous "Mock Pugin-style Folly" with "horrid wallpaper and ill-suited paintings stuck over the top".

The makeover, which cost £500,000 of public money, was a disaster and the ordinary woman was left "sobbing" at the thought that she had to foot the bill.

A spokesman for Lord Irvine said, "I am a friend of the Prime Minister. How dare you criticise me?"

LORDS REJECT LOWERING OF TROUSERS

That Debate In Full

Lord Backwoods: My Lords, the simple fact of the matter is that these homosexuals are utterly disgusting and what they get up to is pretty disagreeable. That is why it is vital that this House should not contemplate any further lowering of trousers.

Baroness Malaprop: My Lords, one of the essential freedoms of any civilised society is the basic human right of two consenting adults of whatever age to lower each other's trousers in the privacy of their own public convenience.

The Bishop of Sodom and Gomorrah: My Lords, some of my best friends have been arrested for their beliefs. If we reject this Bill we condemn thousands of young Anglican clergymen to a lifetime of celibacy. Surely it is time for trousers to be lowered for once and for all.

The Earl of Longjohns: When I was a boy in 1823 anyone caught engaging in an act of beastliness would have been thrashed within an inch of his wife. And it never did any of us any harm. Free Myra Hindley now.

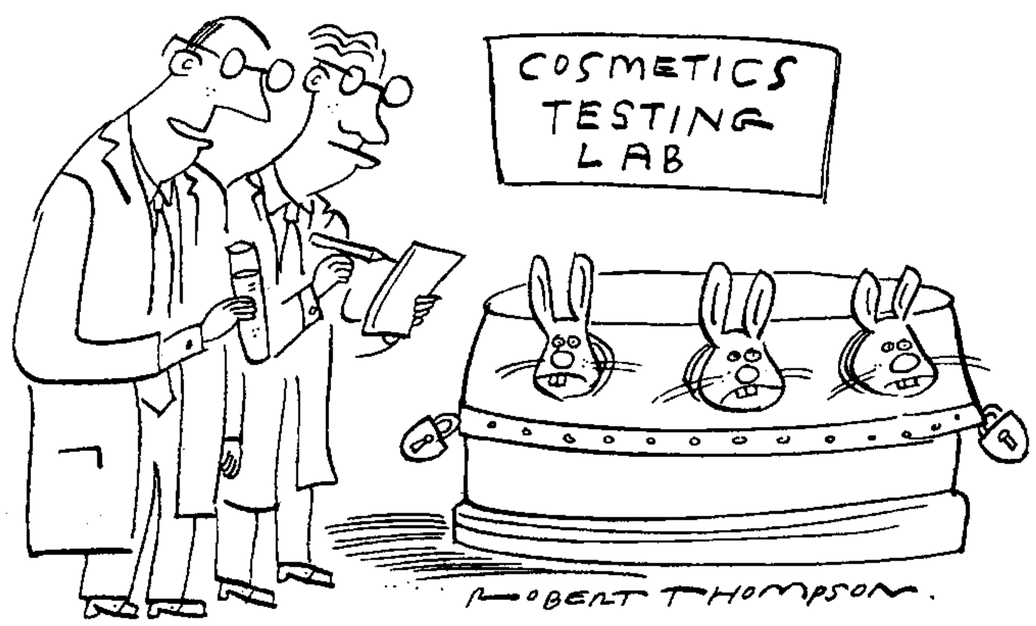
Chief Rabbit, Lord Jacobsbiskitz: The law of God is immutable. As it says in the Holy Book of Leviticus: "He that lowereth the trousers of another man shall be deemed to have committed an abomination, and shall be stoned even unto death." I move an amendment that trousers should be raised at once.

(The debate concluded in an overwhelming defeat for the Government's proposal. The Trousers Bill was sent back to the House of Commons to be pressed for a third time.)

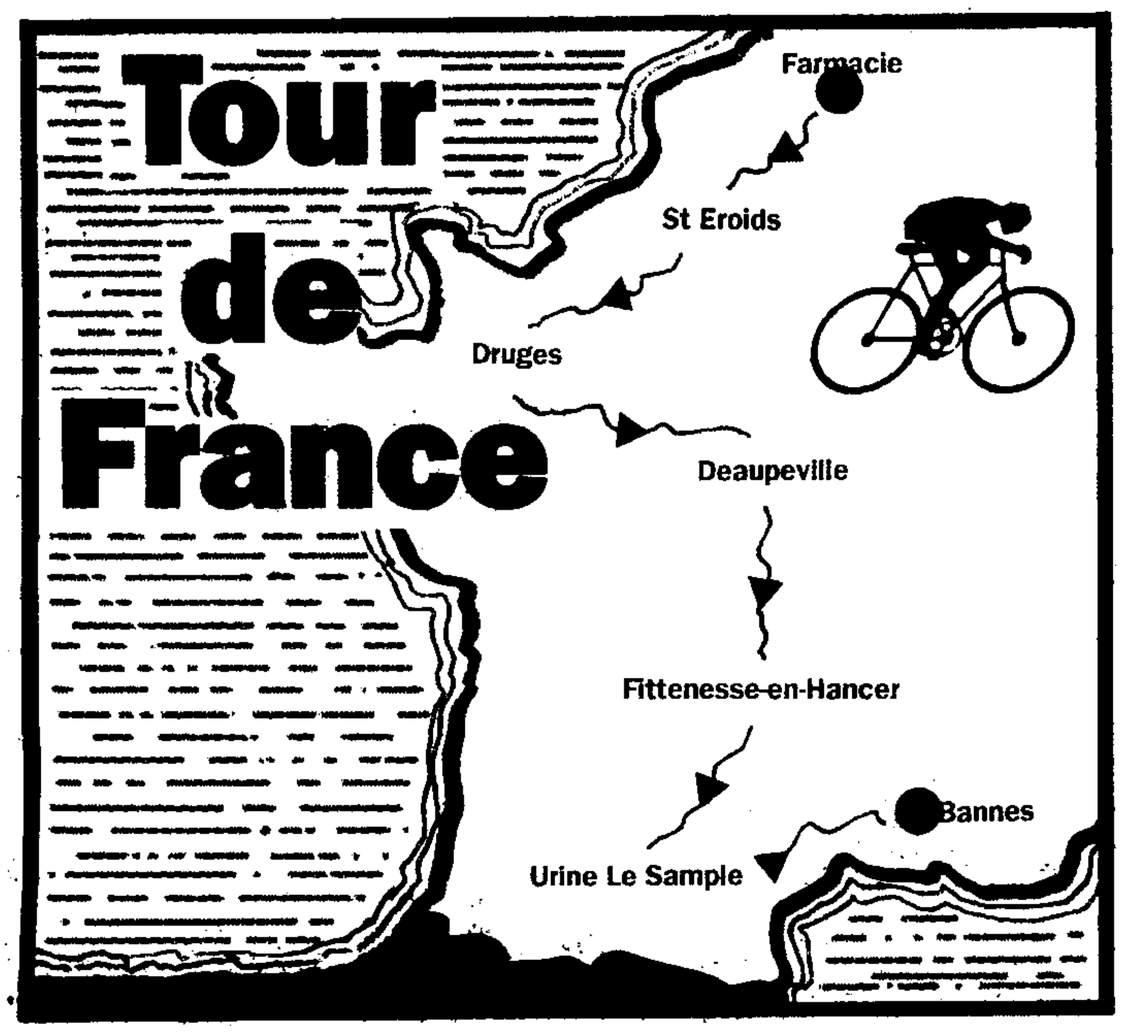
TV Choice

Pick Of The Day: 1 ½ Up (Granada for BBC)

It's just over a year on from when we last visited the young people who many believed were going to play a prominent part in a brighter future for Britain. Since we last saw them, much has changed. Young Harriet, who said that all she wanted to do in life was to meet people and help old ladies across the road, sadly lost her job in the local dole office. Meanwhile, Peter has managed to get himself a proper job, after spending the last year hanging around a huge building site, looking for some work to happen, whilst Jack has managed to get work as a bouncer in a local "boys' own" club. Unfortunately, one of the original subjects of this film, Frank, through reasons known only to himself and the world's media, has decided that he no longer wanted to be a part of this project.



"Yes, it gives my hare a deeper, longer lasting shine"



Jour Quatre-Vingts Quatorze (Day 94)
Route In Full

BRITAIN'S BEST-LOVED COMIC CELEBRATES 60 YEARS

by **The Staff of The Spectator**

IT'S HARD to believe, but the comic loved by generations of old bores in the Garrick Club is 60 this week.

The *Hasbeano*, with its rich cast of larger-than-life cartoon figures, has become an indispensable part of British culture.

Among the characters the magazine has made famous are:

● **Charles "Lord Snooty And His Pals" Moore**, the stuck-up toff who doesn't know what's going on!

● **Taki the Rotter**, the unloveable Greek spiv who is always in trouble with the police!

● **Paul the "Spanker"**, the red-faced moralist, who is always caught out in the last frame with his trousers down being spanked on the bottom!

● **Desperate Bruce**, the big fat man who can never get enough to drink!

● **Petsy the Minx**, who teases all the men old enough to be her dad!

● **The Posh Street Kids, Billy the Hague**, and many many more!

Leading the celebrations will be the anonymous figure of the comic's latest editor Frank Johnson, who says "The *Specco* is exactly the same as it was 600 years ago when it was started by Alexander Chancellor" *(Surely 'Pope'? Ed.)*.

START THE WEEK with Jeremy Paxman

Paxman: Good morning. My guests this morning all have one thing in common. The fact that they are in this studio. We've got the well-known palaeonto-geneticist Professor Jean Drone, who has just published *The Impossible River*, a look at inherited speech patterns in Icelandic farming communities. The playwright David Drudge, whose classic trilogy on the class system *Shoot The Bastards!* has been revived at the National Theatre. The much-acclaimed Ukrainian novelist Viagra Viagrova, who has just published a new anthology of contemporary Ukrainian verse. The Canadian installation artist Tammy Moosejaw. And to help me move the discussion along, the Times columnist Mary-Lou Useless.

So, professor, if I can start with you, who on earth do you think is going to be interested in this book you've written? It's 850 pages long, and it's unreadable.

Drone: When I first began my study in Reykjavik in 1958...

Paxman: Oh, come on, professor, Reykjavik for goodness sake. Couldn't you have found somewhere more interesting?

Drone: ...er...

Paxman: Well, if that's all you've got to say, then it's hardly worth coming in. Now, this play of yours, Mr Drudge. Isn't it just a waste of public money, putting it on? No one wants to go to the theatre.

Drudge: I've always been fascinated by the peculiarities of the British class system...

Paxman: Oh, do shut up. This isn't the 1950s, you know...

Mary-Lou Useless: Could I just butt in here to ask Mr Drudge whether the character of the Welsh trade union leader was based on anyone in particular?

Paxman: Of course it was, you stupid woman. Everybody knows that. Who else is here? *(Consults notes.)* What's an installation artist, when it's at home?

Moosejaw: Well, Jeremy, when I began as an art student in Saskatchewan...

Paxman: Oh no! Saskatchewan! It's even worse than Reykjavik! And the other woman's from the Ukraine...

Drone *(overheard in background)* ...and the interesting thing about Icelandic initiation rituals in the fishing communities of the...

Paxman: ...don't tell me about fishing. If there's one thing I know about, it's fishing. I landed a million-pounder the other day in Broadcasting House, using this programme as bait.

(Enter Sir Christopher Bland carrying £1 million cheque mounted in glass case. Programme comes to halt rather earlier than expected. Solemn music fills up rest of slot.)

A Doctor writes

AS A DOCTOR I am often asked, "Can I have a sick note, doctor? I want a day off." The simple answer is, "I am sorry, the doctor is currently unavailable for consultation due to unavoidable sickness coinciding with the last day of the test match. A locum will be available as soon as he sorts out his problems with customs and immigration. Thank you."

What happens is that in the summer most of the country have had enough of work for the year and decide they would much rather bunk off for the day. Bye!

© *A. Doctor*

BLOOD ON CARPET AS BUTCHER BLAIR WIELDS AXE

by Our Political Staff **Alastair Campbell**

IN THE most savage display of political machismo ever seen in Britain, Prime Minister Tony Blair yesterday defied his critics by personally murdering the entire Cabinet *(shome mishtake shurely? Ed).*

By 5.16 yesterday afternoon the blood was literally splattering the walls of the Cabinet Room in a scenario reminiscent of a Tarantino movie.

Killing Frank Fields

All day Whitehall resounded to the sound of bodies hitting the floor, as the serial killer Blair wreaked a swathe of havoc through one department after another.

This is the catalogue of havoc that shocked a nation:

OUT GO

Simon Narg, 47, parliamentary secretary department of paper clips.

Doreen Dripp, 55, junior minister for filing cabinets with special responsibility for harmonisation of tea trolleys.

Mike Trott, 58, minister of state for biros, propelling pencils and ringbinders.

IN COME

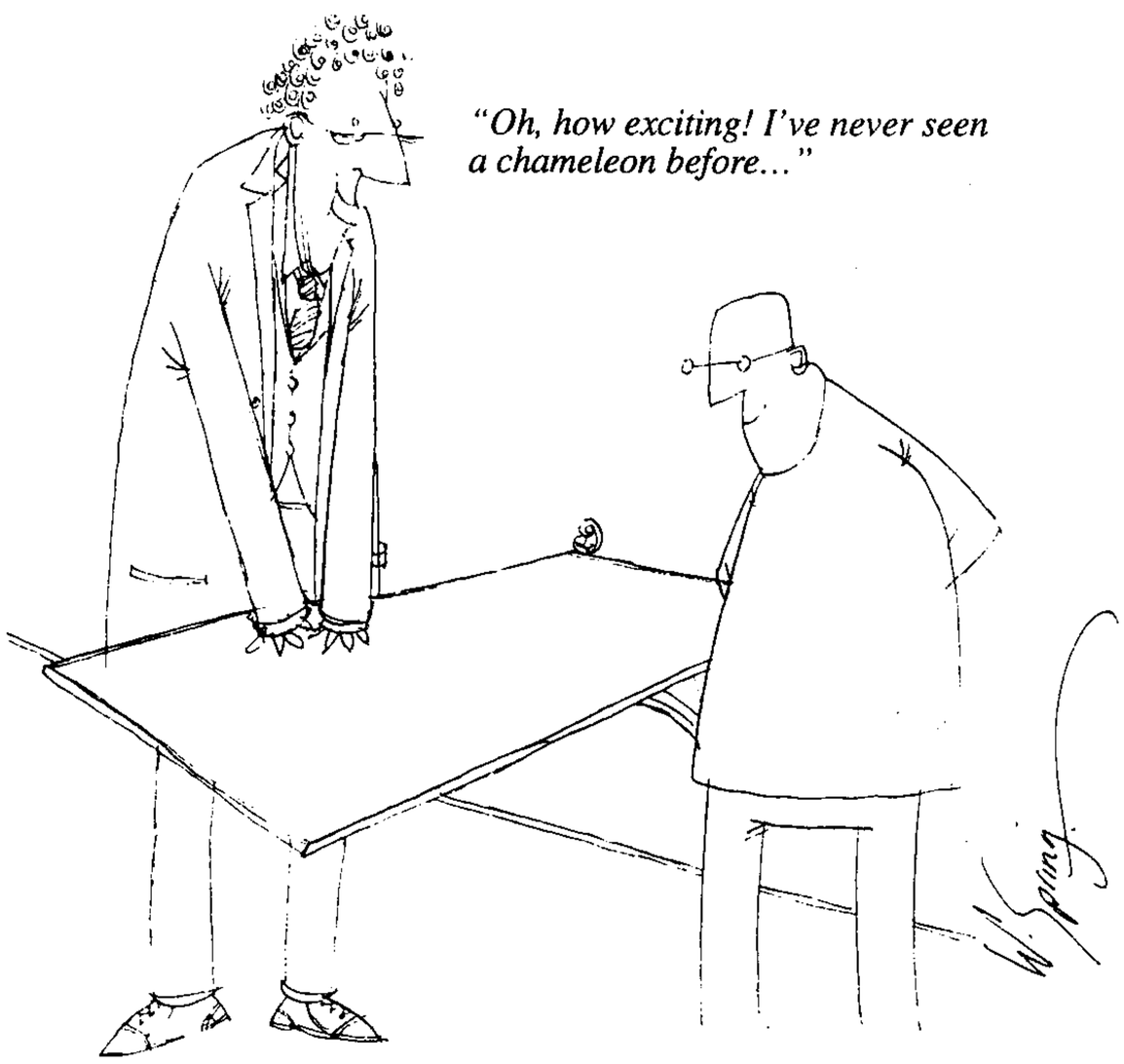
Sandra Newface, 35, straight in as junior minister at the new Ministry of Flipcharts.

Baroness Plum (formerly Mrs Tracy Peach), 52, who steps up to become Lords spokesman on laundry.

A man with a beard, 43, whose name is yet to be discovered, who is to move from his current job to some other job.

Said one Downing Street insider: "I've never seen anything like it. Tony is the most ruthless prime minister the country has ever known. Isn't he amazing? Make sure you put all of this in or you'll be in trouble."

"When you've seen one..."



"Oh, how exciting! I've never seen a chameleon before..."

blair [blɛ:r], *s.m.* *P:* Nose. **Je l'ai dans le b.**, I can't stand him at any price.
blaireau [blɛro], *s.m.* 1. *Z:* Badger. 2. (Badger-hair) shaving-brush. *Art:* (Badger-hair) brush; softener, blender.
blairer [blɛre]. 1. *v.tr.* *P:* To sniff at (sth.). **Je ne peux pas le b.**, I can't stand him. 2. *v.i.* *P:* To smell bad.

Harraps New Shorter French Dictionary

'WE HAVE DONE NOTHING FOR 50 YEARS' MI5's shock claim

by Our Spy Staff **Phil Bee**

IN A shock defence of its reputation, Britain's leading cloak-and-dagger organisation MI5 today claimed that it had not been responsible for the assassination of Harold Wilson, the disappearance of Red Rum, the sinking of the Titanic or indeed anything else.

"We are getting sick and tired," said an anonymous spokesman Sir Clive Postit, "of being accused of getting up to all sorts of skulduggery, dirty tricks and top-level surveillance.

"The truth is we have done nothing for 50 years except sit round drinking tea and doing the Telegraph crossword. By the way, did you get 5 across? 3 letters, starts with 's', ends with 'y', 'Man who sits around doing the Telegraph crossword'? Beats me, old boy."

GEORGE BROWN 'OCCASIONALLY DRUNK' Shock Revelation

by Our Records Staff **R. Kive**

UNDER the 30-year old rule, journalists are allowed to present old stories as if they are new, on the grounds that everyone will have forgotten them.

The Eye can therefore reveal that the much-respected Foreign Secretary, George Brown, was fond of drink and was often "the worse for wear".

This will come as an astonishing shock to the author of the book *Pissed Again — The Authorised Biography Of Lord George-Brown (1986)* and other historians who have long assumed that the late Mr Brown was a life-long teetotaller.

A secret photo of Brown, only published by all newspapers at the time

TOMORROW: Hitler Had A Moustache, Archives Reveal.

DEMPSTER FLOORED AFTER 12TH ROUND

by Ian Wooldridge

LIGHTWEIGHT champion Nigel "The Pratt" Dumpster had to be dragged off his opponent yesterday when the referee sensationally stopped the fight after only two minutes outside the lift in the famous Daily Mail offices.

It was an extraordinary end to what was billed as "The Punch-Up Of The Century" — "Dead Loss" Dumpster vs. the unknown challenger "Who He" Helliker.

Hardcastle Much Better

Dumpster came out of his corner table at Launceston Place looking like he meant business. His face was red, his speech slurred, his mouth set in an ugly grimace.

"I'm going to get you, you bastard," he taunted Helliker who tried to duck and dive as the Punch-drunk diarist lunged at him again and again.

Then suddenly it was all over as the referee stepped in and declared Dumpster unfit to continue writing for a national newspaper.

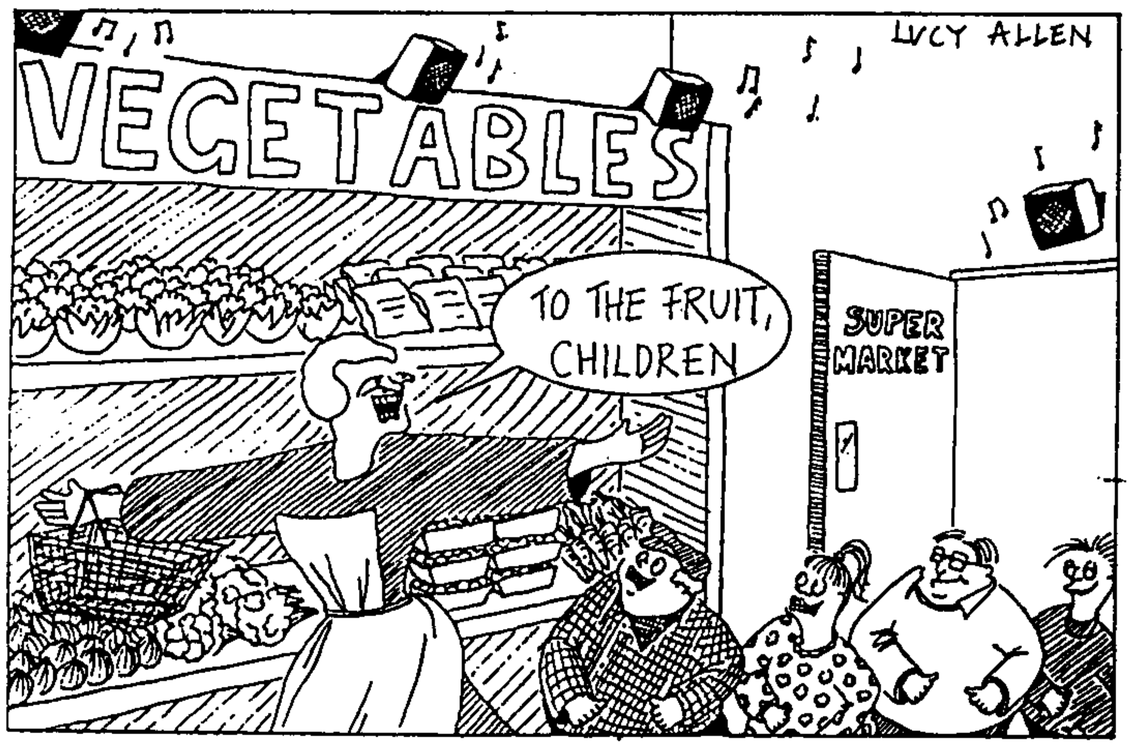
He won on pints

On other pages

Is this the end of the road for Dumpster? 2

Is Dumpster Brain Damaged? 3

Dumpster comes up with a good story at last 4



THE SOUND OF MUZAK

COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
Saturday: Her Majesty The Queen will today make a state visit to the McDonald's Fast Food Drive Thru Emporium in Neasden. She will be presented to the manageress, Miss Katie Wandulu, MBE, who will introduce her to the members of the staff who have bothered to turn up: Mr Wayne Mark, Mr Daryl Wayne, Mr Mark Daryl and new trainee Mr Nigel Dempster (one-star server).

Her Majesty will be supplied with the following Happy Royal Meal:

- One "Big Ma'am" with Queen-size fries and leisure drink of Her Majesty's choice.
- One complementary plastic Godzilla toy.
- One McDonald's "Duke of Edinburgh Do-Nut" with raspberry jam bearing legend "Have A Nice Day".
- One colourful paper crown presented to Her Majesty by Mr Ronald McDonald, CBE.

Her Majesty's official cavalcade will process past window number two and will suffer a short delay in the car park while Katie tries to discover why Her Majesty has been given "Nuggets with Bar-B-Q sauce" and not fries, as ordered. The meal will then be ceremonially thrown away by Lady Emilia Right-Fogg (Mistress of the Queen's Takeaway) and Her Majesty will return to Buckingham Palace for a proper luncheon.

ADVERTISEMENT

New from the US

HAVITOFF

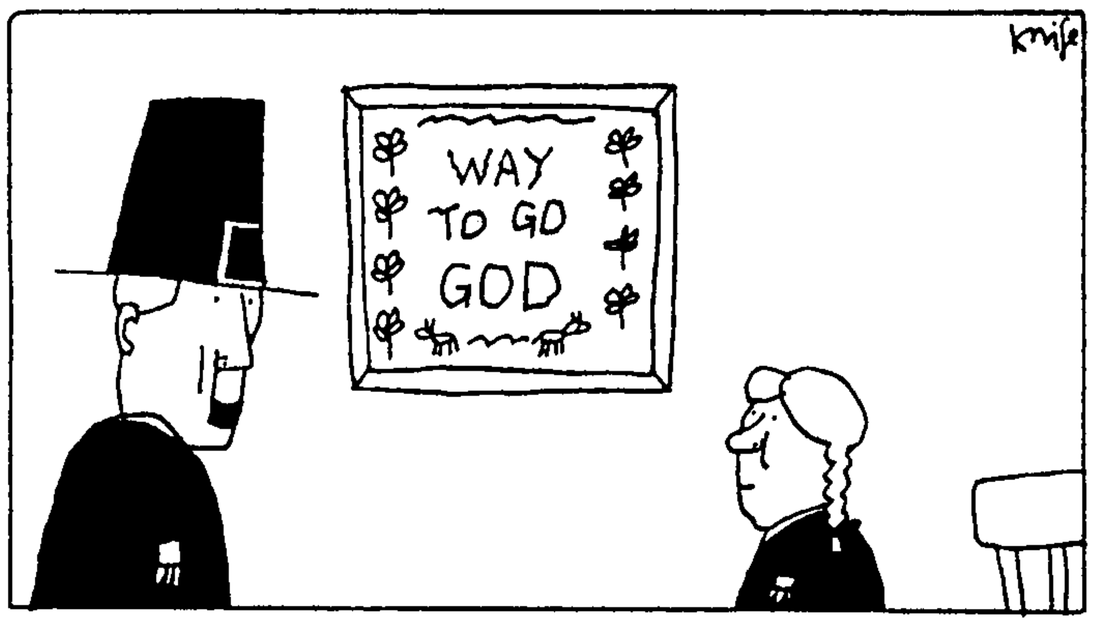
MIRACLE STAIN REMOVER

As used in the White House!

"I had this embarrassing stain on my character that I couldn't get rid of," says President B.C., "but then I discovered Havitoff and I'm more popular than ever!"

For your own chance to try the wonder of Havitoff send £39.99 at once to: The Gnome Stain Remover Offer, GnomeChem, Unit 94, The Trading Estate, Porton Down, Wilts.

"And do you, Marsha, take this man, Luther, to be your lawfully wedded husband, over your father's dead body..."



"Nice sentiment, Martha"

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

Living In The Country

by Dominic Lawson (aged 12)

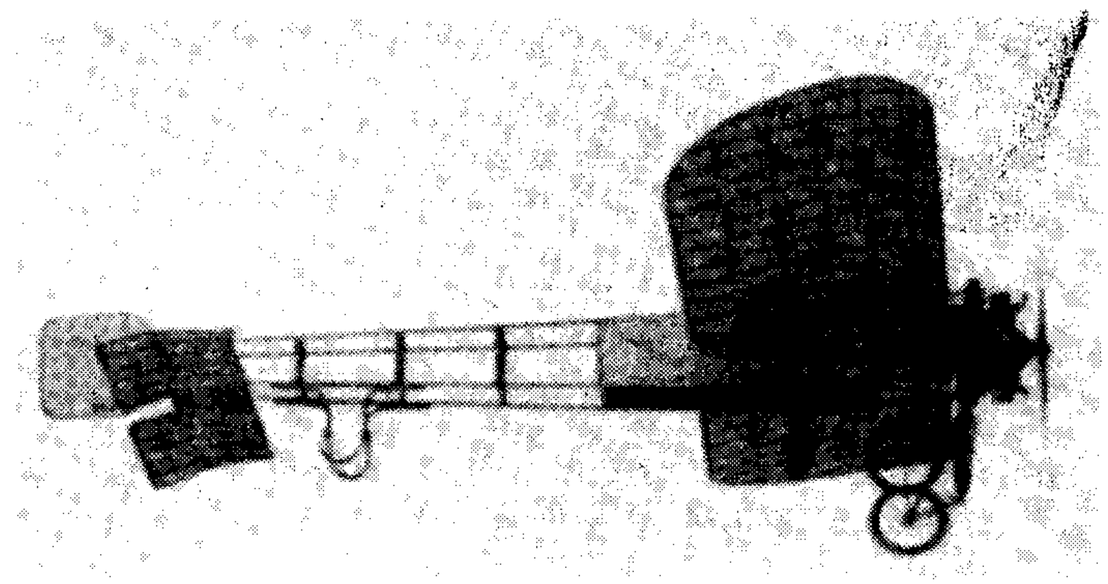
A YEAR ago we all went to live in the country, because London is very noisy and full of cars. The country is very nice with plenty of room for everyone, although there are lots of bugs and creepy-crawlies which get on your sandwiches. There are also microlites which buzz around in the sky when you are trying to write your column! But I still think the country is nicer than the town, and vice versa!

Your Editors Tonight: An Eye Guide

Telegraph: Charles Moore on How I Shot My First Fox

Observer: Will Hutton on The Problem of Unemployment

Times: Peter Stothard on Why Does No One Know Who I Am?



BLAIRIOT MISSION FLOPS

by Our Aviation Staff **Paul and Amy Johnson**

A HEROIC attempt to recreate the historic triumph of veteran aviator Harold Wilson ended in disaster yesterday.

The young high-flier Blairiot planned to get his machine off the ground by using a huge gust of hot air emanating from his supporters.

Those Pathetic Men In Their Lying Machines

But not even Blairiot's team of expert mechanics could put a spin on his propeller.

Blairiot rose briefly into the air and then promptly vanished as he plummeted into a nearby lake and *(cont. p. 94)*

The result is that after completion of projects, outstanding claims may be resolved only through lengthy litigation.

Financial Times

Police with automatic rifles are patrolling markets and bus stations in the capital and medical experts are appearing on state television to explain why penises increase and decrease in size.

Grauniad

Harry Enfield's **Bores** Drawn by **Michael Heath** *The Controversialist*

"Bridget Jones? Dull boring unfunny totally irrelevant to nineties women like me snort dismal failure of a novel unlike my books snort Nelson Mandela? senile decrepit old wanker... look at me... snort shitty little ricket-legged Michael Owen England's ugliest man since the Beatles talentless scouse yobs come friendly nukes & fall on Liverpool aren't the Spice girls superb? mega-snort Diana the most saintly person of the twentieth century except for Stalin see how unpredictable I am I must be really intellectual super-snort Mother Teresa? monster bitch John Paul - the Pontiff every woman worth her sex wants to shag gosh I'm fantastic isn't Serbia sexy? snort rubbish Ruth Pathetic Picardie finally got a good editor - the grim reaper that's done it I've gone too far snort I've been so offensive I'll get a pay rise from the Guardian Waiter! More champagne & lots more buns! WAITER! WAITER! Why hasn't he noticed me? I can't have been controversial enough Hitler was a hunk Nureyev was a nonce St Peter was a ponce somebody notice me please ple-e-e-ase..."

Literary Review

Dog's Breakfast at Tiffany's

The Trials of Tiffany Trott
Isabel Wolff
(HarperCollins, £6.99)

OK. Contract — tick; massive advance — tick; supportive friends in the media — tick; interviews in the national press — tick; dim-witted comparisons to *Bridget Jones's Diary* — tick, tick, tick; plot — oh God, oh God, where is the plot? I've only got that time-worn theme about a thirtysomething girl about town and her problems pinning down a man long enough to produce the patter of tiny feet. Now where's that list gone? Dinky little cover with quotes from Kathy Lette and Marian Keyes — tick, tickety-tick.

But then I feel like pushing the boat out a bit this year. Going the whole hog. After all I've got something to celebrate — a Very Serious Relationship with a *really* nice publisher. *The Trials of Tiffany Trott*. My book. *So* nice. Lovely in fact. And there are still quite a few people who won't have seen the pictures of me smirking at the man from the *Independent*, and I really wanted this piece to be for them as much as me. But that's the really annoying thing about writing a book, isn't it? The way people decide not to read it at the last minute when you've already done all the writing.

My book. My work of fiction. I may not have an *oeuvre*, but at least I have a novel, which is more than can be said for some of my other journalist friends. So *timely* too. You see, the world of ladies' light literature — or "chick-fic" as my editor calls it — has moved on a bit since Bridget Jones. We newcomers, we're older, wiser, sharper, more successful — we wouldn't be seen dead in those ghastly flats. I mean, we live in *Islington*, and some of us pursue very successful careers. After all, Bridget Jones might do the odd interview, but I bet she never made books programmes for the World Service!

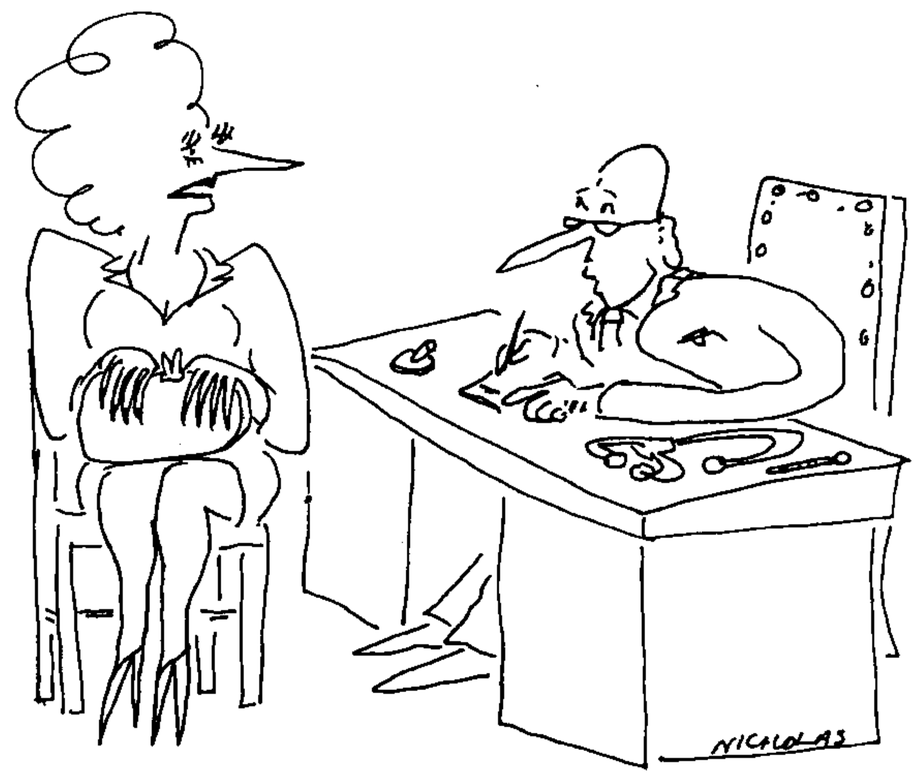
And our predicaments are that much more serious. Babies. The tick of the biological clock. Not just Mr Hunk, with his agreeable residence in Chelsea, or his Sussex farmhouse, but commitment. Rings not flings. *Procreation*.

Anyway, *The Trials of Tiffany Trott* (that alliteration — *so* catchy) has all this and more. Nerdy boyfriend who dumps me at the start — tick; succession of deadbeats, no-hopers, "commitophobes" and spiritual lepers met at singles nights or through lonely hearts columns — tick; gorgeous seriously successful hunk (in fact, I call him "Seriously Successful" which I think is sort of *symbolic*) who happens to be married to somebody else — tick; ritual humiliation at the hands of briskly efficient doctors chatted to at dinner parties, "Late Motherhood files" which I fill with cuttings of fortysomething celebrity births — darlings, it's *all there*.

Of course I'd be the first to admit that we've had *problems*, my book and I. All to do with the tone. You see, this kind of thing is supposed to be "delightful" and "delicious" and yet a lot of the jokes are *pretty black*. I mean, I end up sobbing into my handkerchief a lot on the Number 73 bus going back to N1 a lot, and how would you like it if you had a birthday party for 50 people and only six of them showed. *So* depressing. *Such* a waste of canapés. And then there's the ending. Me and Seriously Successful. The future beckoning. And yet me turning into a commitophobe myself. Sooner or later some tremendous cleverclogs is going to come along and say that it's aesthetically compromised, because the paradoxes are just too neat. "Clearly, darling," I shall say, "you know nothing about popular fiction."

Lots of *very sensible information*, too. For instance, five feet eight and three quarters is not "tall" in a potential swain advertising in a lonely hearts column, it's *medium*. And another thing — *where blokes live is critical*. N1, N4, N5, N16, W1, W2, WC2, SW1 or SW3 or I'm afraid that's it.

So, there you are. *Tiffany Trott*. My book. My novel. Must be *so* depressing for the other girls. Not having written one. At our age. Dreadful. And incomprehensible — after all, they're so easy. You just write them. And then somebody gives you a large sum of money. Lucky for me I've got Tiffany. And it's serious. In fact, well, put it this way — I've just taken out a subscription to *The Bookseller*.



"So after I died my hair blonde I started getting these dizzy spells"

Books & Bookmen

■ THE publishing event of the decade — possibly the century — is almost upon us. On 1 October Grocer Heath's long-awaited autobiography, *The Course of My Life*, is published by Hodder & Stoughton, backed by a *Sunday Times* serialisation, BBC documentary, etc, etc.

Advance copies of the cover have already been sent to tantalise the book trade. It features a portrait of a twinkly Grocer, by top snapper Jane Bown, looking considerably younger than his 82 years and very much merrier than is his wont of late. Bown's credit inside the dust-jacket actually reads: "Based on an original photograph by Jane Bown." *Based on?* Has the Grocer been, er, touched up, de-jowled and un-bagged courtesy of the Photoshop Rejuvenation Clinic? Hodder is strangely reticent on the subject.

The cover blurb describes Heath as "one of the most distinguished figures of modern times" and goes on to list his triumphs: er, Europe, the economy, the unions and Northern Ireland, not forgetting "his activities on the international stage, including his negotiations with Saddam Hussein, shortly before the outbreak of the Gulf War in 1991". Ah yes: that was the time the Grocer's diplomatic skills persuaded the Beast of Baghdad to pull his troops out of Kuwait, so averting massive loss of life and environmental disaster in the Gulf. We remember it well!

Should be quite a book.

■ **EDITORS at Penguin House are furious with David Mellor, the former secretary of state for hanky-panky.**

Having accepted a £100,000 advance for his autobiography, Mellor has failed to deliver — presumably because there were too many embarrassing incidents from his career which he preferred not to recall. Penguin executives, already annoyed by his haughty attitude, are now threatening to make him repay the money.

There is worse news for Mellor. His former friend Paul Halloran, a rubicund investigative hack known as the Terracotta Warrior, is rumoured to be hard at work on an unauthorised life of Mellor which may appear as early as this autumn. As the man who introduced the minister of fun to Antonia de Sancha, he should have many interesting tales to tell.

■ NEIL HAMILTON has resorted to Mills & Boon-style tactics in his quest to persuade anyone who will listen that he never took secret cash from Mohamed Fayed.

The disgraced former trade minister has cooperated with Jonathan Hunt, so-called "investigative" journalist, in a book about the scandal entitled *Trial by Conspiracy*. Here is a sample of Hunt's delightful prose:

"It was not the first time I had walked in on Neil Hamilton's wife, Christine, when she was having a bad day.

" 'Hi, Christine', I said cheerily, pretending not to notice the redness of her eyes. But the tears were already welling. As I crossed the threshold, she subsided into my arms to sob. There with an intensity usually reserved for the loss of a loved one.

" 'Don't despair, Christine', I soothed. 'We'll win in the end. The truth will out — it always does'.

" 'No one cares about the truth', she moaned, her body shaking. 'And no one cares about Neil'."

The cover states Hunt is "motivated by nothing more than the desire to right a wrong". How could anyone doubt it?

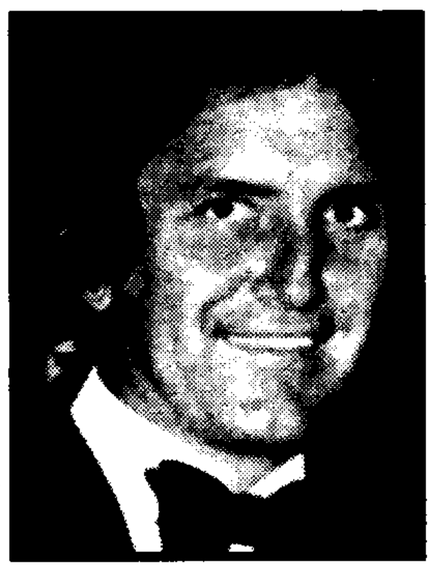
'Bookworm'

footnotes

Noye's abatement

THE final hearings of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry on 16 and 17 July were widely expected to be "sensational". It was put about that many of the awkward questions about the role of the police officers in the Lawrence investigation would be answered in those last two days. In the event, nothing much happened. The much-heralded "revelations" were never revealed.

What happened was this. For some weeks the legal team acting for Stephen Lawrence's parents had been following up what they described as "the Noye connection". Kenneth Noye is a colourful Kent millionaire who was acquitted in 1986 of murdering a masked policeman whom he found skulking in his garden. Almost immediately after the case he got 14 years for VAT fraud connected with gold allegedly stolen in the Brinks Mat bullion robbery.



KENNETH NOYE

He is now on the run, wanted for the 1996 "road rage" killing of Stephen Cameron. Noye's reputation as a gangland leader is prodigious. His long years of freedom are widely attributed to his familiarity with police officers everywhere, and especially in south-east London. About half way through the Lawrence inquiry hearings, the Lawrence family's legal team were informed of a close link between Kenneth Noye and Clifford Norris, a lesser south London gangster. Norris, the team heard, was one of Noye's lieutenants on the south London crime scene.

The team hired the services of former *Sunday Mirror* journalist and crime writer Wensley Clarkson. Clarkson's book about Kenneth Noye — *Public Enemy Number 1* — was published last year and has just been reissued in paperback. Clarkson interviewed several police officers who knew Noye. The story which emerged from these interviews confirmed Norris's close contacts with Noye.

In April 1993, when Stephen Lawrence was murdered, the story went on, Norris had urgently contacted Noye who was still in prison for the VAT fraud. In some panic, Norris had asked Noye if he could help protect David Norris, Clifford's son, who was one of the five first suspects for the Lawrence murder. Noye, it was said, obliged with the names of police officers who might help.

Clarkson's story seemed to provide the missing piece in the jigsaw which had emerged from the inquiry up to that time (see recent *Eyes*). It helped to answer some of the questions about the appalling delay in arresting the suspects. The Lawrence legal team was hoping to bring the story out in the final stage of the hearings. The problem was that none of Clarkson's sources were prepared to sign a statement justifying the story. Clarkson himself refused to sign, for fear that he would be asked on oath to name his sources, to whom he had promised confidentiality.

In private session behind the scenes, the Lawrences' lawyers sought permission from the four-man inquiry and its chairman Sir William Macpherson to raise the matter anyway. Inevitably they were told that without a single sworn statement or witness they could not do so. So the hearings petered out without any further links between police officers and Clifford Norris being exposed, and without a single reference to the name Kenneth Noye.

Sainsbury's: Truck off and die

BILLIONAIRE Lord Sainsbury, the new Trade Minister, recently gave the Labour party £2m — a little bit more than the compensation his firm has just shelled out to a driver crippled for life in a Sainsbury's depot.

A year ago the *Eye* received a lot of complaints about safety conditions for fork-lift truck drivers at the Sainsbury's Houndmills depot at Basingstoke, Hants. The high-powered Sainsbury's public relations machine screamed into action, assuring the *Eye* of the astonishingly high safety standards at the depot.

That wasn't quite the story at the inquest in October last year of Sainsbury's depot worker Maurice Disney. He died from multiple injuries after his fork-lift truck went off in the wrong direction and crushed him against a wall. An independent consulting engineer told the court that if the truck had been properly maintained, the accident would never have happened. The jury brought in an unusual verdict: unlawful killing.

Neither Lord Sainsbury nor any of his directors nor the company was charged with manslaughter. Instead they continued to instruct their lawyers to fight to the bitter end against Joseph Kasa, another former loyal worker at Houndmills depot. Eight years ago, in 1990, Mr Kasa was driving his fork-lift truck in the depot when it overturned. He managed to throw himself clear but the fall smashed his leg, which suffered a complicated compound fracture.

He sued Sainsbury's for negligence. The firm vigorously denied all blame. Mr Kasa's pain got worse, but he did not give up. On and on dragged the case for eight years in what Mr Kasa describes as "a nightmare".

Sainsbury's didn't budge until the case came to the door of the court where its lawyers threw up their hands and blandly offered Mr Kasa £150,000 plus his costs, which he accepted.

Embassy tip

THE *Eye*'s analysis last April of the conviction of two young Palestinians, Samar Alami and Javed Botmeh, for the 1994 bombing of the Israeli embassy in London relied heavily on a remarkable revelation by former MI5 agent David Shayler: that British intelligence had received a clear warning that an anti-Israeli London bombing was planned. Such a warning, the *Eye* suggested, if disclosed at the time, would have cast further doubt on the guilt of the accused.

Now the *Eye* can reveal something even more remarkable. Soon after the bombing a senior MI5 manager wrote a note expressing his view that the Israelis had carried out the bombing on their own embassy to embarrass the British government into providing more security for Israeli buildings and personnel. The note was written in September or October 1994, two or three months after the bombing.

The possibility that the Israeli intelligence service Mossad played some part in the bombing was seriously considered by the defence before, during and after the trial. Among the many mysteries of the case were:

1. The lack of casualties. No one was killed in the attack on the embassy or in the bombing of Balfour House, Finchley, which housed the Zionist Federation.

2. No video recordings were made of the car

Who bombed the Israeli embassy?

EYE No 948. 17 April 1998

carrying the bomb by the highly sophisticated surveillance equipment in the embassy. The man whose duty it was to watch the videos was removed from his post at the embassy immediately after the bombing and was not available at the trial.

3. The two accused did not take part in the bombing. Both had cast-iron alibis. If they were engaged in the conspiracy of which they were convicted, their fellow-conspirators were never found. In particular, the young man called "Reeda" who befriended both accused and took Botmeh to buy the bomb car was never identified.

4. The woman who was charged with planting the bomb car, who was connected to the two accused, was so obviously innocent that she was discharged before the defence case was heard.

None of this even starts to prove Mossad involvement in the bombing, which for obvious reasons seems unlikely. But the suggestion that a senior MI5 anti-terrorist agent believed that the Israelis were responsible obviously casts even more doubt on the convictions of Samar Alami and Javed Botmeh.

Unlike the warning, the note is a document which still exists. The convicted pair will be seeking its immediate disclosure. Last November, when the *Mail on Sunday* first disclosed the existence of a warning, Gareth Peirce, solicitor to both defendants, wrote to the CPS asking for disclosure of the warning. She has had several acknowledgements but no disclosure or even denial that a warning existed. Her last letter wonders whether the CPS will be waiting the full 20 years of the sentence before disclosing vital material.

What a Pratt!

SARAH WILSON was 16 and still at school when she met and fell in love with Karl Wheeler. Almost at once the couple had a baby boy, Aaron.

After living with her parents for a short time, Sarah and the baby got a council flat in Farnborough, Hants. Wheeler never lived there. From time to time he would visit Sarah and Aaron, but never paid them any money. In March last year the couple had a violent row about a letter to Wheeler from the Child Support Agency demanding £8,000. Wheeler denied he was Aaron's father and demanded DNA tests before he paid a penny. He left in a rage.

In May, Wheeler wrote to Sarah apologising profusely for his bad temper, admitting fatherhood and begging Sarah and Aaron to go on holiday with him "to make things up". Sarah was suspicious but she

SARAH WILSON

was infatuated with Wheeler and longed for her son to have a father living with him. She agreed, and Wheeler booked and paid for a fortnight's package holiday in a hotel in Margarita, off the coast of Venezuela.

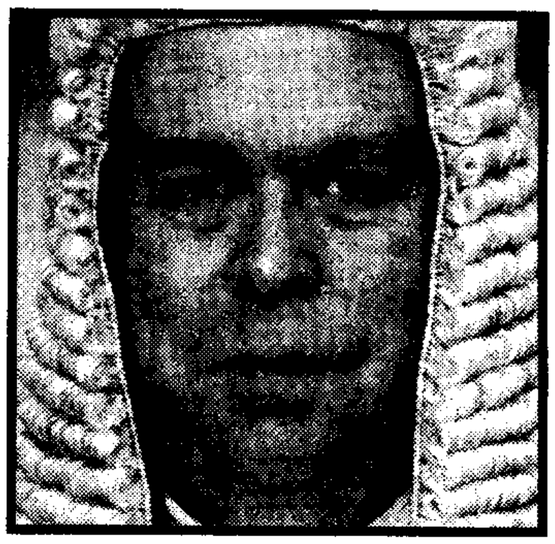
On the day before Wheeler, Sarah and Aaron were due to return to Britain, three suitcases appeared in their hotel room. Sarah was appalled. She writes to the *Eye*: "We had a huge row, and he told me he was taking the cases back to England for a friend." She asked about drugs, and Wheeler furiously denied that he would run such risks for Sarah and Aaron. She inspected the cases. They were empty.

They packed their clothes and belongings in the cases and loaded them on the plane back to England. At Gatwick, they took a taxi back to Farnborough. Drugs had been detected in the bags and the taxi was followed. It was stopped by police on the M25. The three cases had false bottoms which had to be unscrewed with a screwdriver. They contained cocaine with a street value of more than £1m. Wheeler and Sarah were arrested.

In prison Wheeler made a full confession. He admitted he was part of a gang which had plotted to bring in the cocaine. He explained that a "family" was necessary as a "cover", so he had persuaded Sarah to go with him. He insisted that he had never discussed his illegal project with Sarah who knew nothing about the drugs, either before the trip or after the cases appeared.

He pleaded guilty to drug-running. At Croydon crown court on 19 to 23 March, Wheeler gave evidence for the prosecution. In the dock were Kevin McCulloch, Steven Synott, Trevor Smith and Sarah Wilson. McCulloch was convicted as the ringleader and got 20 years. Smith got 17 years. Synott was acquitted. Sarah Wilson gave evidence. She said she had never known about the drugs and if she had would never have travelled. What little evidence there was, for instance about her demeanour on arrival at Gatwick, supported her story.

Half way through the trial the prosecution conceded that she had not known about the drugs when she left England, but argued she must have known about them in Margarita. The jury found her guilty of "knowingly" importing the drugs. Judge Pratt told her: "You were put in something of a dilemma by Wheeler and to an extent must have been an unwilling partner... this reduces the sentence below that which I should otherwise have been forced to have imposed." He sent her down for 12 years. He then sentenced Wheeler, who had got her into the dilemma in the first



JUDGE PRATT

place, to eight and a half years.

After the sentence Wheeler wrote to his MP Gerald Howarth: "I cannot live with this guilt. Sarah Wilson was sent to prison for something she knew nothing about, Sir... I knew Sarah would accept (the offer of the trip) because she was always madly in love with me and always wanted us to be in a proper family... Sir, please look into this case because a good mother has been found guilty for something I done."

The couple's son Aaron is living with his grandparents. Sarah writes: "I love my son more than anything else in the world and it breaks my heart to be separated from him."

In a letter to Gerald Howarth, an official from the solicitors' office of Customs & Excise wrote: "Given her limited role, we do accept that the sentence of 12 years is more than we would have expected" — a very rare example of the prosecuting authority criticising a judge's sentence for being too long.

Clarke Cant

ANYONE who thinks that the sloppiness of Kenneth Clarke QC MP in refusing to refer the case of Derek Bentley to the court of appeal as home secretary in 1992 was unique should recall that the same Clarke refused to refer the Carl Bridgewater case too. (See the *Eye*'s moderate response to that decision, no. 813). As in the Bentley case, the Bridgewater convictions have been quashed.

NATIONAL GREED PLC 2

THE hot war between pensions ombudsman Dr Julian Farrand, who gives his advice and makes his decisions free of charge, and the closed shop of pensions lawyers in the City, who will give you advice for anything upwards of £400 an hour, is carried bravely on in the ombudsman's new annual report.

In a few succinct sentences Dr Farrand makes an awful mess of the absurd judgment last November of Mr Justice Robert Walker in the case of the National Grid company. Dr Farrand was asked by two retired electricity workers whether the National Grid employers had been justified in swiping £62m of the surplus in the pension fund after privatisation in 1993.

No, he ruled. The money was illegally taken and should be given back to the pensioners. A provision of the pension scheme insisted: "Any amendment to the scheme shall be void to the extent to which it would otherwise have the effect of making any of the monies of the scheme payable to any of the employers." Nothing could be clearer. Changes could not be made to the scheme to benefit the employer.

The National Grid appealed. Mr Justice Robert Walker listened intently while six QCs at a minimum wage of £500 an hour (four for the employers, two for the pensioners) droned on interminably, and then concluded: "I think, with respect, that the ombudsman attached too much weight" to the provision which specifically banned changing the scheme to benefit the employers. Comments Dr Farrand drily: "Why he thought this remains unclear to me. Surely not because what four QCs say must be truer than what two say!" The judge allowed the appeal. So the already bloated National Grid can keep the money (and, into the bargain, National Power directors can keep £377m of pensioners' money which they swiped in the same way).

The two pensioners want to appeal against this fantastic judgment, but they have no money. On July 31st, in the High Court, Mr Justice Carnwath gave them permission to charge their costs to the pension fund - to a limit of £100,000. The companies' legal spending is unlimited.

NOT THE SILKS' FAVOURITE: Dr Farrand

Dobson's choice

IF THE new University College of London hospital were built by the NHS in the silly outdated "old" Labour way, it would cost the taxpayer £160m and the hospital would belong to the NHS. Under exciting, hard-headed "new" Labour's private finance initiative (PFI), the new hospital will cost the taxpayer £1bn — and will then belong to a consortium headed by AMEC plc.

The scheme is a triumph for a typical "new" Labour favourite Sir Alan Cockshaw, who stepped down last year as AMEC chairman. Cockshaw is a leading light in the New Millennium Experience company, Peter Mandelson's pride and joy, and chairs Manchester Millennium Ltd, which is rebuilding the city after the 1996 IRA bombing.

AMEC is not the only firm in the lucky consortium which will build the new hospital (and develop at vast profit four plum sites once occupied by the old UCH and the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson hospital near Euston station). Another company in the group is the Buildings and Property Group, the privatised version of the old publicly-owned Property Services Agency.

Private Fortunes
PFI
Incorporated

The PSA privatisation was widely denounced at the time not only in the *Eye* but also by the national audit office (NAO) which could see no logic or purpose in the process. When the NAO report was published, the local Labour MP almost went off his trolley with indignation. "The sheer scale of incompetence, mismanagement and waste beggars belief," he howled. "The officials and ministers responsible should be identified and sacked."

The MP was Frank Dobson, now secretary of state for health and the country's most enthusiastic supporter of building hospitals by PFI.

You can write to Paul Foot at Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or leave a message for him on 0171 287 3183

In the City

SILENCE would seem set to be golden for "Copperfingers" Charlie Vincent and his rugby-loving Winchester Commodities partner Ashley Levett regarding the Sumitomo copper scandal.

More than two years after news broke of the $2.6bn lost by the Japanese house through unauthorised deals by its star trader Yasuo Hamanaka — certain of the more contentious ones through Winchester — there is little sign of any prosecution by the Serious Farce Office. Indeed, sources close to the slow-motion investigation expect a no-further-action decision within the next month or so.

Aided by Hamanaka's confessions, the Japanese authorities have prosecuted the one-time copper king and regulators here and in the United States have forced Sumitomo to hand over $133m to compensate for his manipulation of the copper market. Meanwhile the SFO investigation has been making little progress.

Delays in obtaining documents from Guernsey relating to assorted Vincent/Levett companies have contributed to the pedestrian pace; as have legal problems with the illegal seizure of records from a London accountant which had to be returned after a drubbing from the high court. The current position is that the SFO is understood to be in the final stages of examining the Guernsey documents and certain bank records as part of the remaining lines of inquiry. Once this is completed it seems more than likely that Vincent and Levett will be home free.

But life after Winchester — the commodity trading group was wound up by its owners in March — has been far from sunshine and smiles for its founders, despite their moves to tax-free Monte Carlo. Levett has found his bankrolling of Richmond rugby club a continuing drain on the bank balance, with profitability still a far off dream. But Levett's problems pale in comparison to those of his former partner, who has been made to look a real Charlie by falling for a classic "Ponzi" circular money scheme scam run by former busted out stockbroker Nicholas Rowley and friend of the famous fund manager Alexander Jones.

Vincent together with his family and friends, such as property man Casper McDonald-Hall, are estimated to have invested up to £15m through Jones on the promise of returns of 40 percent to be made by Rowley. By the time the balloon burst in late 1996 Vincent was claiming his group was owed £35m, including the entirely fanciful profits. Furthermore, he and Levett had invested another $11.5m with Rowley directly to buy shares of which around half was later recovered.

Rowley was made bankrupt last December with admitted debts of £60m. Just how much Vincent will recover is unclear, but possibly less than £5m as the Rowley creditors and former Jones clients are unlikely to get more than 18p in the £.

However, Vincent's lawyers Rakisons have many reasons to be cheerful. Their fees and costs totalled an amazing £950,000 by the time Rowley was made bankrupt — for recovering £7.5m from him. No doubt further fees have been earned since then as Rowley's trustee in bankruptcy and other creditors have been arguing over what happened to the Rowley money. Much of it — around £3.5m — went to offshore family trusts linked to Vincent and one of his other pals Peter Scrancher. Jones has yet to pay back anything despite agreeing to do so.

All of which may raise questions about how long Vincent will be able to afford Monte Carlo. Maybe until the SFO sounds the all clear?

WHILE the SFO's reputation for taking care of business when it comes to locking up fraudsmen may be on the rise, it clearly still has a lot to learn about money making. The fraudbusters have to do more with less as their budget continues to be trimmed. But the SFO has not exactly helped the cause by failing to take the opportunity to cut one of its largest administration costs — the rent of its Elm Street headquarters.

Elm Street was rented from the offshore-owned property company Safestem in December 1987 near the peak of the office property boom at a rental of £1.5m a year. The 25-year lease allowed for a rent review after seven years.

Come December 1994 and director George Staple and his deputy John Knox were preoccupied with fighting fraud and a junior civil servant was deputed to negotiate at least no or a small increase as rents were no longer booming and Elm House was far from a prime property. Sadly the opportunity to cut or hold the rent was allowed to slip by. As a result the SFO remain locked into an increased rent until 2008.

When this expensive oversight was discovered the civil servant concerned was disciplined for wasting taxpayers' money. Quite correctly no action was taken against Staple and Knox who have since departed in search of fresh triumphs.

ON THE Sam Goldwyn adage that any publicity is good so long as they spell the name right, the Ritz Hotel in Paris was able to reduce its routine lossmaking last year.

With occupancy rates up and presumably fewer MP freeloaders, the phoney pharaoh Mohamed Fayed's hostelry managed to reduce the loss from just over £5m to just under £2m. One more of the Fayed trophies — Fulham and Punch are other examples — which continue to eat money.

CONFUSION grows around the future of Network, the Hambros-owned private investigators who are very much up for sale now that the bank's new South African owners are house cleaning. Senior staff continue to head for the exit, further reducing the sale price. Hambros is said to have Network in its books at £14m but will be lucky to receive half that according to those with knowledge of the business. Several outside contenders have looked and walked away complaining that Hambros want too much for too little. But just when the senior Network directors thought this gave their MBO a clear run, it appears that a rival MBO offer has been mounted from one of their disaffected colleagues. What will be left worth having — other than Network's two electronic gizmo businesses — when the smoke clears remains to be seen.

MR BELIZE, aka Michael Ashcroft — one of Tory leader William Hague's chief fundraisers — is heading back into the City with a bid for security outfit Capitol Group.

"At last! We're copying something from the Japanese"

He is making his comeback via Strand Partners, an advisory group controlled naturally from offshore Guernsey. The partners include such well known names as former British Leyland boss Sir Michael Edwardes, merchant banker Richard Fenhalls and William Guinness. One of Ashcroft's ADT apparatchiks joined the Strand board in April.

With £170m to spend after selling ADT last year, Ashcroft has plenty to play with. But in true Ashcroft style the Capitol transaction shows him on both sides of the deal. Strand already owns one-third of Capitol which is being injected into a shell vehicle destined for the AIM market along with a building services company in which Ashcroft is also involved.

Such incestuous deals were the reason the City quickly cooled on the pinstriped predator the last time forcing him to export ADT to Bermuda and Wall Street. As ADT shareholders learned last year — when he benefited from some fortuitously acquired share options — the usual result is that Ashcroft gets the mine, investors get the shaft.

THE sudden demise of Andrew Bruce as managing director of electronics group Channel Holdings may be less related to the collapse in 1997 profits than to boardroom strains which have been going on for two years. Pressure for Bruce to go was mounted by some directors during 1996 but resisted by chairman Philip Ling. But it would seem the anti-Bruce camp has been proved right. Channel is believed to have been particularly hard hit by the sudden collapse of major customer Meritlink Cables & Wires in January, which owed up to £700,000. Analysts will be watching closely for any creative accounting in the almost halved profits of £2m. The fall of two-thirds in the shares to 11p is hardly a vote of confidence in chairman Ling even now he has allowed Bruce to take the fall.

'Slicker'

Celeb

LIGGER

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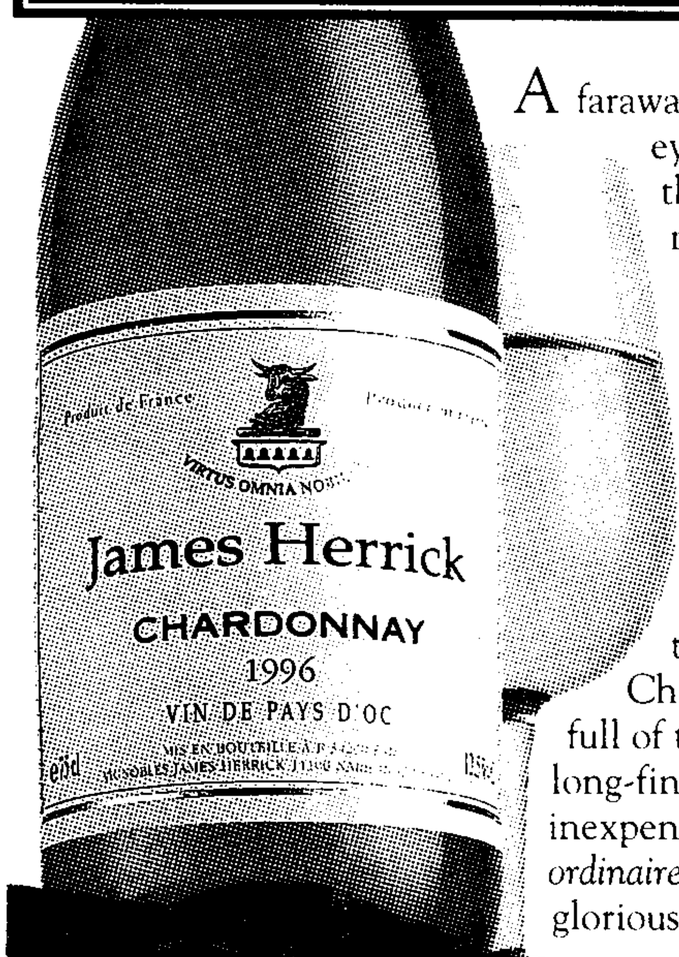

A faraway look comes into people's eyes when mention is made of the South of France. For most, it is the capital of *chic*: a sun-kissed playground of exotic resorts and spectacular scenery studded with ancient vineyards - among them, *La Motte*, *La Boulandière* and *Les Garrigues de Truilhas*, where James Herrick makes the definitive *Midi* Chardonnay. Rich, stylish and full of taste; fresh, yet fruity and long-finishing. And amazingly inexpensive. Why settle for *vin ordinaire* when you can afford the glorious South?

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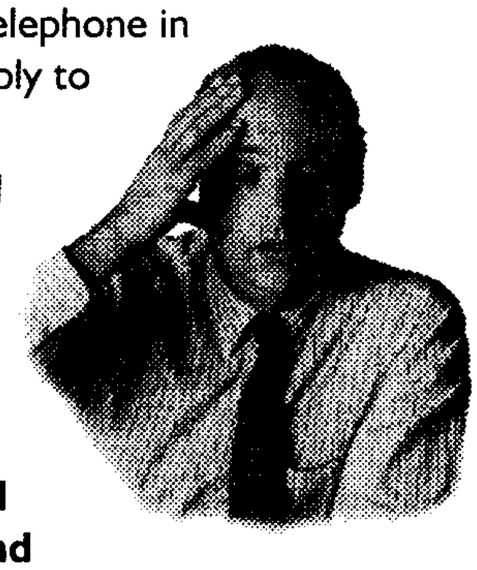

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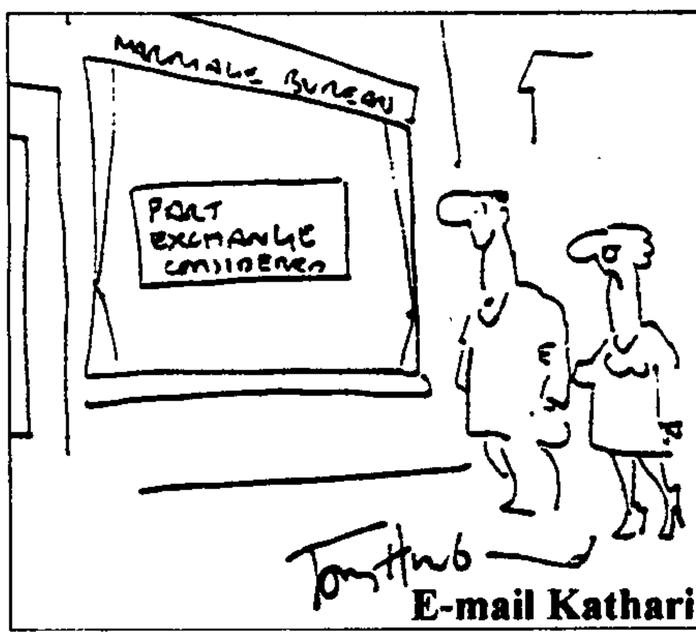

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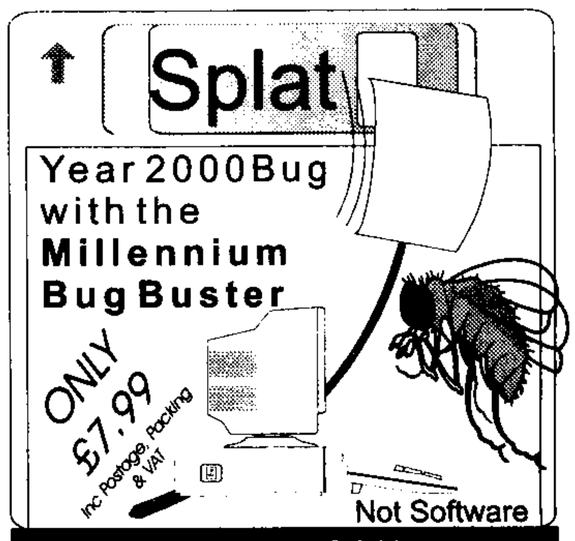

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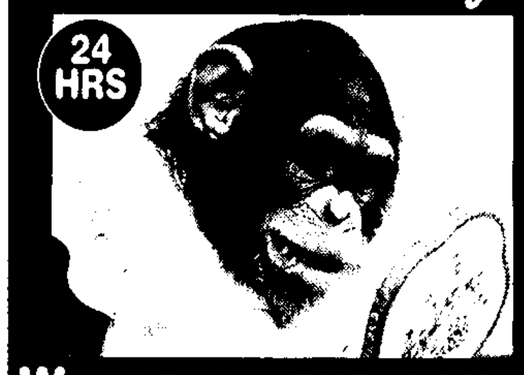

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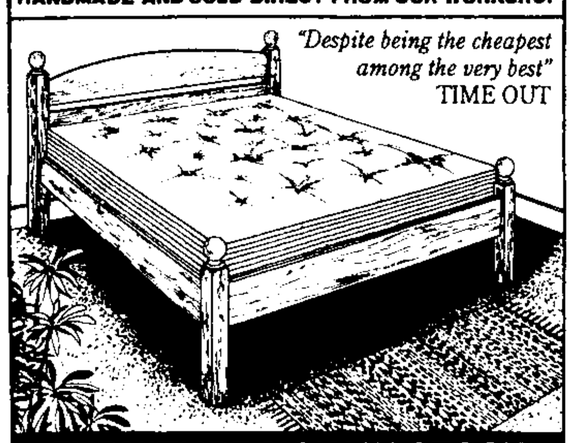

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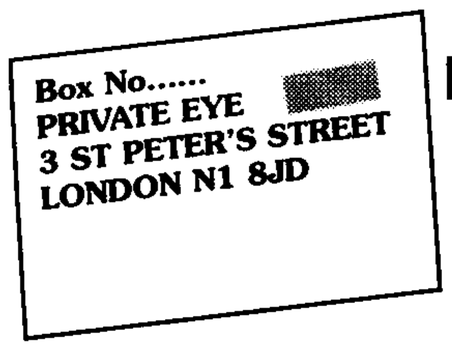

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COVENT GARDEN – Singles Drinks Parties. Every Thursday and Saturday ages 30-50 – £15. Free Drinks & Buffet. 07000 301501.

CHATLINE – instant contact with woman and girls 18+. Message exchange. Calls cost 60p per minute. JCG, BN22 8PW – 0640 644026.

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ADDITIONS – nationwide newsletter – Attached? Yet need a friend? – 0181 905 3304, 0181 958 9657 – total discretion assured. Featured on ITV, American TV, BBC, Radios 4/5. Established 1992.

FREE fetish contact magazine. Send name, address and four 26p stamps for postage to: FCC(PE), PO Box 609, CARDIFF, CF1 7UF.

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EVENTS/CONTACTS/PARTIES for broadminded, uninhibited singles and couples. CLUB APHRODITE – PO Box 2097 Luton, LU3 2HR. Telephone: 01582 750947.

ADULT CONTACTS – private club, free magazine. Call, 24 hours, 01784 246788, ext 695.

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EYE LOVE

57 YRS OLD DIVORCEE, 5'5", medium build, fun and animal loving, very gregarious – has a lot to offer the right, tall man with GSOH. I am romantic, caring, and looking for someone to re-light my dying flames, before they go out altogether. Take pity on me! East Midlands or close. Box 1056.

VIAGRA UNNECESSARY! Attractive, lively, Glos woman (50's, tied), seeks loyal, intelligent man for friendship, laughs, rapport. Photo please. Box 1156.

DOES YOUR BRA SIZE end in DD, E or beyond? Then this witty writer / musician would LOVE to hear from you? Box 1256.

CO DIRECTOR, 29, single, successful, needs fun, attractive, female to stop me turning into my own father! Trips to sunnier climates available often; write to me before I decide to join a monastery. Box 1356.

BEAUTIFUL, EARTHY WOMAN wanted by specialist teacher/expedition leader (male, 29) in Perthshire cottage. Box 1456.

M – LONDON BASED, interested in reading and collecting books, WLTM F for occasional dining out and cinema / theatre. Age immaterial. Box 1556.

GOOD-LOOKING midlands graduate guy, 33, seeks busy, fortysomething nymphomaniac. Box 3456.

SEVERIN, tall, graduate, professional male – fit, attractive, solvent 40, seeks WANDA compatible age, background for relationship. Box 1656.

TALL, NON SMOKING professional male (40, gsoh, ohac) becoming cynical, seeks world weary middle aged woman with dentures / kids / husband(s) etc. to demonstrate that one can still have fun/ a social life/ a love life after separation/divorce! West London area. Box 1756.

ATTRACTIVE, WITTY, successful, straight, separated, Eye-reading male (36) seeking female for grown-up fun weekday evenings. Suggestions welcome. Discretion assured. Central London. Box 1856.

GOOD LOOKING MALE, 37 with 12" wallet, seeks attractive lady 25-35 for mutual, comforting and laughs. Box 1956.

TALL, PROFESSIONAL, Bohemian, handsome male (33), successful, self-made, and spontaneous, seeks free-spirited female who is intelligent, ambitious and unpretentious. Box 2156.

FUN, FIT, FIRM, philandering fellow, 40, fancies filly for fling. Yorks / Links / Aberdeen. Box 2256.

INCREASINGLY REBELLIOUS occupant of post-war (JUST) pinstripe suit, 46L, yearns for occasional lazy afternoon truancies with relaxed occupant of well-loved jeans (preferably long leg). All responses answered. Box 2356.

ATTRACTIVE, QUIET,
sensual, thoughtful woman,
30,
seeks similar
unattached man,
30-40 for long-term relationship.
Bucks/London.
Box 2954.

MORIBUND, MARRIED EXPAT, 44, home alone in Levant treasure house, seeks literary or literal liaison with libidinous lady to help dispel ennui. Saucy SOH essential. Box 2456.

TALL, DARK, ATTRACTIVE graduate, 34, seeks Mrs. Robinson. London / Herts / Bucks areas. Box 2556.

WANTED – MAN 30+ who can climb mountains and dance, by girl who likes climbing mountains and dancing. Pert bottom preferred. No himbos. Box 2656.

NIGERIAN 34 YRS, in Paris, needs female friend interested in LOVE. Box 2756.

ARE YOU FED UP with holidaying on your own? Well, so am I. This 40-something male seeks female to share holiday sometime September / October for one week. All expenses paid. Surrey/Sussex. If interested call: COLIN 0966 486706. I look forward to hearing from you.

TALL, HANDSOME, STRONG hairy Henley male WLTM romantic, sexy lady 35 to 45. Same area. Photo please. Box 2856.

LOVELY, CREATIVE, tall, brunette, 33 seeks sorted, tasty, interesting man to make her happy. No affairs or Tories. Ex-pats in Africa encouraged. Box 2956.

TALL, AMUSING, assertive, sensuous, generous and successful Bristol and London man, 40, seeks a naughty younger woman for some discreet fun and games. I love travel, cinema, theatre, restaurants and dinner parties, music, keeping fit, nights on the town and weekends in the country. if you would like a fun relationship with some spice please write to me with your telephone number to Box 3056.

LONDON BASED professional man, 52, loosely attached, generous, loving, adventurous, fit and frisky – seeks lively and attractive girl, 30-45, to enjoy occasional evenings, and possibly holidays, together. Box 3156.

THEATRE-GOER, 28, London, seeks attractive bright female to share interval chats about Shakespeare, Ibsen, sex and death. Box 3256.

HIGHLY EDUCATED
professional male (50's),
seeks sensual and
sophisticated woman
for mutually satisfying affair.
Age and marital status unimportant.
If you are genuinely available
please get in touch.
Discretion assured.
North West.
Box 3356.

TALL, AMUSING, ATTRACTIVE, sensuous, generous and successful Bristol and London man, 40, seeks a naughty younger woman for some discreet fun and games now that Summer has arrived. I love travel, cinema, theatre, restaurants and dinner parties, music, keeping fit, nights on the town and weekends in the country. if you would like a loving fun relationship with some spice please write to me with your telephone number to Box 0952.

TALL, HANDSOME successful London man (married, 50) seeks lovely lady friend and lover. Box 3251.

EYE SOLDIER

BOSNIA! Unconventional Army Officer (32) needs female leave planning assistance. Box 0656.

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